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TRUE TO THE CORE.

A Story of the Armada.

THE T. P. COOKE PRIZE DRAMA.

BY

A. R. SLOUS, Esq.

A. R. Slous. Esq.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.
1866.

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PRICE ONE SHILLING.

TRUE TO THE CORE.

A Story of the Armada.

THE T. P. COOKE PRIZE DRAMA, 1866.

BY

ANGIOLO ROBSON SLOUS,

AUTHOR OF

"THE TEMPLAR," "HAMILTON OF BOTHWELLHAUGH," "LIGHT AND SHADOW,"

ETC. ETC.

"The subject of my story is the dawn of England's glory,
When her stripling Navy smote with mortal stroke the giant Spain,
And her landsmen, true and ready, show'd a front both bold and steady,
A front whene'er a foeman comes they'll surely show again."—OLD SEA SONG.

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

1866.

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HARVARD COLLEGE
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F. E. Chase,
Boston.

TO THE

MASTER, WARDENS, AND COUNCIL

OF THE

ROYAL DRAMATIC COLLEGE,

AND

EVERY WELL-WISHER TO THAT EXCELLENT INSTITUTION,

THIS DRAMA

Is Respectfully Dedicated

BY

ITS AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH familiar to the theatrical world, it is, perhaps, not generally known that the late accomplished actor, Mr. T. P. Cooke, bequeathed a sum of money to the Royal Dramatic College, the interest of which, at certain intervals, was, in the form of a prize, to be given to the Author of the best original Nautical or National Drama, the awardment of such prize being regulated by the conditions which usually govern a public competition. The prize was £100, and the successful candidate was required, by the stipulations of Mr. Cooke's will, to surrender to the Dramatic College all right and control over the future of his drama, the Master and Council of the said College possessing the exclusive right of determining at what theatre the piece in question should be performed, and also appropriating all profits that might arise to the benefit of the excellent Institution over which they preside.

In a pecuniary sense, the reward was certainly not a tempting one, and the conditions linked with it of a somewhat stringent and irritating nature. But there is always something animating in a contest. Besides, it was of course imperative that the pieces sent in should be original. The plot and incidents could not be filched from continental dramatists, and this (to me at least) imparted an additional zest for trying a fall in an arena from which the plunder of Parisian theatres was to be rigidly excluded. For these reasons, in a rash hour, I was tempted to become a candidate for the T. P. Cooke Prize, though not, I confess, without sundry warnings to abandon my intention.

Most of us, I believe, possess amongst our circle of friends one whose peculiarity it is to see everything through the medium of a very gloomy atmosphere. I, at any rate, am blessed with one of these unpleasant, but useful Mentors, who thus, with almost cheerful alacrity, at once pointed out "a Rock ahead:"—"Should you fail, and no doubt you *will* fail, you will be annoyed; should you succeed, you will only create enemies. And your subject! The Spanish Armada! Why, the very name suggests the *Critic*, and of course a *Sneer*." This was not exhilarating, but I knew that critics and sneers would be sure to come without any suggestion; and notwithstanding the awful shapes of Tilburina and Whiskerandos conjured up to fright me from my purpose, I refused to be alarmed. But my cheerful friend hadn't done with me. His rocks began to multiply, like Falstaff's men in buckram, with terrible rapidity. "Nautical! why, your sailors can't appear in

blue jackets and white trousers, because they didn't wear 'em. You mustn't speak of the Union Jack, because our ships didn't carry it. You can't allude to Greenwich Hospital, because it wasn't built; and who, I should like to know, is to sing 'Rule Britannia,' when the man who composed it wasn't born?" This was the way my friend raked me fore and aft. But I let him fire all his guns, and persisted with sullen obstinacy in sticking to my ship. I could not see why, because a man of brilliant genius had selected it as a vehicle for satirizing the turgid bombast of his time, so glorious an epoch in our nation's history should never be approached in a more serious spirit —an epoch too, I presumed to think, so memorable in the annals of our Navy—our infant Navy! For, compared with its present stupendous growth—it was then but a mere baby. A very vigorous baby I'll allow, an infant Hercules if you will, ready to strangle the serpents that came to assail him in his cradle—but still an infant. But though small, our Ships, our Captains were great. Drake, Raleigh, Hawkins, Frobisher, Effingham—these, at least, were no babes to deal with, as Philip II., of blessed memory, found afterwards to his cost: true sons of the Scandinavian Sea-Kings who hung their shields over their galleys, sides, worthy progenitors of the men who sustained the glory of our flag at the Nile and Trafalgar. Thank Heaven, there are enough of us still left in this island, even in these degenerate days, when the hideous system prevails of turning everything, however graceful or elevating, into a ghastly kind of mockery*—that hateful practice of taking the fair statue from its niche, merely

* The true province of satire is surely to select for the object of its attack that which is in itself ridiculous. Is that the case with our modern writers of burlesques? No. Shakspeare, Scott, Byron, are all seized by these funny gentlemen, and smutted over with their dirty fingers. Even the touching, glorious legend of "Virginius" has not escaped their profaning hands being not very long ago distorted into a vile and monstrous shape. Did Henry Fielding, in his matchless burlesque of "Tom Thumb," seek to degrade the grand? or Sheridan, in his terrible "Critic," aim his shafts at the beautiful? No; it was the inflated nonsense mouthed so often by the tragic heroes and heroines of former days at which these great writers shot the burning arrows of their wit, and well did they hit their mark. But what are the chief features of our present burlesques? The works of great men profaned; young and talented actresses thrust continually into male attire; blue-bearded, hoarse-voiced men disporting themselves in woman's garb; and our noble English tongue word-tortured (shade of Thomas Hood! I believe it is called punning), maugled, broken on the wheel, for the delectation of audiences nine-tenths of whom have never read the originals thus trailed through the mire for their amusement. This is the dainty fare flung night after night to the British public, and on which, alas! the British public seems to batten with uncommon relish. It will be said this is the public taste; if so, shame on those who pervert and prostitute their talents by pandering to it. Better an honest crust earned by a stout birch-broom, that at least cleanses a public crossing, than turtle and ortolans supplied by gratifying an unclean craving for the desecration of all that should command our esteem or veneration.

to debase and defile it, even as the reptile sometimes drags its filthy slime over the marble shaped by the genius of the sculptor into a thing of beauty;—there are still, I say, those who can feel their blood throb with quickened pulse as they read of that memorable July night when, in the immortal verse of our great historic poet, "the fiery herald flew" from hill to hill to warn England of that awful Crescent, seven miles from horn to horn, looming off the Lizard Point. Ay, what a night must that have been! Recollect our assailant was then the mightiest empire in the world. Our countrymen knew their invaders came to stamp out the very life from the heart of England; and remember, also, the horrors perpetrated in Flanders did not appeal to our forefathers, as to us, through the haze of centuries. The miserable fugitives from that unhappy land were dwellers here. The shrieks of the victims must have seemed to ring in their ears, and the flames of burning Flemish villages to redden the lattice-panes of our English homesteads. There was not an Englishman along our threatened coast of Devon who clasped to his breast that night wife, daughter, sister, whose heart must not have turned sick at what might be the fate of those dear ones on the morrow—not a mother who watched her sleeping baby in its cot, who knew not too well that a few hours might see her darling tossed on the gory pikes of the Spanish soldiery. But our Sea-Kings were on the waters, while—

> "Our landsmen, true and ready, showed a front both bold and steady:
> A front whene'er a foeman comes, they'll surely show again."

Such is the theme (too long, I venture to think, neglected by far abler pens than my own) I have endeavoured to illustrate in dramatic action. Doubtless it was a perilous experiment to choose such a subject. Doubly perilous, it appeared to me, was the enterprise of Messrs. Shepherd and Creswick in inaugurating their season by the production of a drama, the chief interest of which was necessarily of an historic nature. Severe ordeal I expected, but not, I frankly confess, the ordeal I have passed. Disguising a heavy heart, I endeavoured to do my best to aid the praiseworthy efforts made by the lessees of the New Surrey Theatre to give my piece every advantage in their power. Yet to me their very lavish outlay on costumes and extensive scenery was saddening rather than pleasurable. To what avail, I said to myself, this careful attention to authorities? Why this care to make the Hidalgo of the Spanish ship look as if he stepped from the canvas of a Velasquez, or a Murillo? Of what use the attention bestowed upon the barbaric magnificence of his Peruvian cup-bearers? Why try and realize the bold Drake and his companions, their doublets doffed for that famous bowling-match, not to be suspended—no, not even for the approach of the Invincible Armada? In vain did I see the skill and labour,

both of the scenic artist and machinist, expended upon efforts which were to give reality to the Spanish galleon-of-war, and the isolated grandeur of the Eddystone Rock. I was not reassured. Alas! where was the funny man, nay, *men?* (for I was informed that two of these comic personages were imperatively demanded by a transpontine audience.) Where was the heroine in white, with her hair down? Where was the double hornpipe, the broad-sword combat; and, above all, where was the little child to pick up the weapon when struck from the hand of its gallant defender, and reinstate it in his grasp? I knew too well where they were *not*, and nerved myself to abide the consequences of these sins of omission. For it is not a pleasant thing, Mesdames et Messieurs of "Westward Ho," to be—you know what I mean—even in that *terra incognita* in which the very graceful and commodious New Surrey Theatre is located. A variety of circumstances—amongst which was, perhaps, a very natural curiosity to see what stuff the Prize Drama was made of—drew together an audience which literally crammed the house on the opening night of the season to the ceiling. It was certainly not a reassuring sight that over-crowded and, of course, somewhat turbulent pit—that vast, seething, surging gallery, so Amphitheatre-like in aspect, so suggestive of a cruel populace, ready at any moment to demand the immolation of its victim. It is unnecessary to enter into any account of the result of that night's trial; suffice it to say, that the managers received their well-earned meed of reward for all their efforts in the genuine and hearty applause of their auditory, while the author experienced the agreeable surprise of finding himself called for, but not as a victim. I think I am justified in saying that the verdict of the public press (with two notable exceptions) was confirmatory of the verdict of the public. The knowledge that success to the Prize Drama may, in some considerable degree, benefit the interests of the Royal Dramatic College, might possibly have had a generous influence in swaying that verdict towards a favourable conclusion. Be that as it may, there *were*, as I have said, two critics (one of them belonging to a most influential journal), who suffered no such weakness to dilute the acrimony of their venom. One of these gentlemen, whose notice was as short as it was savage, and from every line of which oozed forth malice and crass ignorance in most impartial proportions, has, I have reason to believe, some connexion with one of those great music halls which exercise so beneficent an influence over the minds and morals of the rising generation. It may possibly explain his enmity to the interests of a regular theatre. So eager was this writer to find fault, that it seemed offensive, in his eyes, for the mariners of the days of Elizabeth to wear doublet and hose. This might be excused. It is true a public censor of other men's works should be expected to be tolerably educated, but a deliberate, malignant falsehood admits of no palliation. This gentle-

man (I suppose I must use the conventional phrase) insinuated that I had plagiarized a character from Mr. Watts Phillips's "Huguenot Captain." Now, it so happens, and my asperser must have well known the fact, the candidates for the T. P. Cooke Prize were compelled not only to send in their pieces, but that the prize was awarded months before the "Huguenot Captain" was produced! This needs no further remark. Of my other and far more important censor, I will only borrow one of the phrases used by himself, and assure him that I fully recognise how well he did "his *little utmost*" to destroy me in an article which affords a remarkable example of how ingeniously a dramatic critic and *writer* can try to crush a brother author, yet keep on tolerable terms with a manager.* If either of these gentlemen, or both, should feel inclined to appropriate the Caps I have flung them, by all means let them put on the headgear. I may possibly meet them at an annual dinner of the Dramatic Authors' Society, or even, perchance, in the Stranger's Room of the Garrick Club; if so, nothing will afford me greater pleasure than the opportunity of expressing my deepest sympathy for the keen disappointment which both, I know, have experienced in having failed to injure the interests of an institution founded for the benefit of the old and the helpless of the dramatic profession, by their very abortive attempt to extinguish the first result of the wishes of one who was not only a great actor, but, what is better, a good man.

I have now a far more pleasing task before me. It is briefly but earnestly to thank all who have been associated with the production of the T. P. Cooke Prize Drama. If I abstain from particularizing the especial merits of some who have lent me their aid, it is because I know the public have already recognised them. Still, I cannot conclude without rendering my hearty acknowledgments to Mr. Creswick, not only for the courteous manner in which he endeavoured to meet my wishes and carry out most of my suggestions, but for the manly vigour and tender pathos with which he embodied the character of Martin Truegold—an impersonation principally conducive to a success which, I sincerely trust, will be commensurate with the liberal and enterprising spirit shown both by Mr. Shepherd and himself.

* An author has no right to expect exemption from criticism, but the notice in question was not a criticism—it was simply one long continuous sneer. For example: an English pilot devotes himself, his new-made bride, and some eight hundred of his country's foes to destruction, rather than open the way to a Spanish squadron into the port of Plymouth. This act is commented on after this fashion:—"Martin does his little utmost to foil the schemes of Philip of Spain." *Ex uno disce omnes*—I give it as a sample of the way the critic did *his* little utmost, and the very sneaking mode in which the delegates of Great Jove sometimes use his thunder.

Dramatis Personæ,

As first performed at the New Surrey Theatre, Sept. 8, 1866.

ENGLISH.

HOWARD OF EFFINGHAM (*Lord High Admiral of England*)		Mr. ALFRED NELSON.
SIR FRANCIS DRAKE	*Sea Captains*	Mr. WOODFIELD.
SIR WALTER RALEIGH		Mr. C. ALLBROOK.
SIR JOHN HAWKINS		Mr. EDWARDS.
SIR MARTIN FROBISHER		Mr. JOHNSON.
SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM (*Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth*)		Mr. SMITHSON.
MARTIN TRUEGOLD (*a Devonshire Pilot, Keeper of the Beacon of Plymouth Hoe, and Host of the "Pelican"*)		Mr. CRESWICK.
WALLET (*a Pedler*)		Mr. SHEPHERD.
GEOFFERY DANGERFIELD (*a Jesuit Priest, assuming the name of Adam Musgrave*)		Mr. HENRY MARSTON.
SIR GILBERT TREVANNION (*Governor of Plymouth Citadel*)		Mr. C. BUTLER.
SIR MAURICE CHUDLEIGH	*Gentlemen of Devonshire, in league to aid the descent of the Spanish Armada*	Mr. F. MAYNARD.
MASTER GILES TRACY		Mr. MATTHEWSON.
MASTER STEPHEN WELFORD		Mr. STEPHENS.
SHACKLE (*a Gaoler*)		Mr. MACLEAN.
FLEMING (*the Rover*)		Mr. DALTON.
HUGH FLETCHER	*Retainers of Sir Gilbert Trevannion*	Mr. EDWARDS.
SIMON LYNN		Mr. STAMFORD.
DICK MERRYWEATHER	*Mariners*	Mr. W. C. WILLIAMS.
CLOVELLY JACK		Mr. C. LLOYDS.
TOM O' BIDEFORD		Mr. HUMMERSTONE.
ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ENGLAND		Mrs. MORTON BROOKES.
MABEL TRUEGOLD (*called the Rose of Devon, Bride to Martin*)		Miss KATE SAVILLE. (Her first appearance here.)
MARAH (*a gipsy girl, surnamed Flash o'Fire*)		Miss G. PAUNCEFORT.

SPANIARDS.

DON DIEGO DE VALDEZ (*Admiral of the Castilian Division of the Armada*)		Mr. E. F. EDGAR.
DE SILVA	*Officers of "La Santa Fé"*	Mr. GRACY.
GOMEZ		Mr. C. HERRING.

English Mariners, Townspeople of Plymouth, Morris Dancers, Spanish Sailors, Soldiers, Gitanos, or Spanish Gipsies.

The Scene is laid on and near the coast of Devonshire.

Time—July, 1588.

TRUE TO THE CORE.

ACT I.

THE BEACON.

"'Twas in Fifteen hundred eighty-eight,
As a July sun went down,
With backward clang the bells they rang
In the streets of Plymouth town.
And through the night our Beacons bright
Threw far and near their glow,
To rouse Old England's sons to arms,
To meet the coming foe."

"Plymouth Hoe," a Ballad.

The summit of Plymouth Hoe, overlooking the Sound. On one side (L.) *the exterior of the Hostel of the "Pelican," behind which is supposed to be the Bowling-green. Near it is the Beacon of Plymouth Sound—a huge cresset of iron on the top of a lofty mast, the summit of which is attained by a ladder, and connected by a beam fixed in the wall of the Inn just below a window. From the beam hangs the sign of "The Pelican," with "Ye Pelican. By* MARTIN TRUEGOLD," *written beneath it. At the back of the stage* (R.) *is a group of rocks with two paths, one leading over the cliffs, the other to the beach. As the curtain rises, a large number of English sailors are discovered with flowers in their caps, grouped opposite to the Inn, near the door of which is seated* WALLET, *the Pedler, his staff and pack by his side.*

Chorus of Mariners.

A cheer, bully boys! a cheer, bully boys!
A lusty, rousing cheer!
Give it with a will for the Bridegroom bold,
Likewise for his Bride so dear.

For the Bridegroom is a proper man,
Oh, a proper man is he;
And his Bride is Devon's fairest Rose,
Yes, Devon's Rose is she.

Full many a ship hath he brought to port,
With timbers safe and sound, boys;
'Tis meet we wish him a voyage fair
To the haven where he's bound, boys.

So a cheer, bully boys! a cheer, jolly boys!
A cheer for Devon's pride!
And three for Devon's fairest Rose;
Yes, *three* for the dainty Bride.

Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

DICK MERRYWEATHER.—Yarely, boys—yarely! Well given; and not a man in Devon merits a mariner's cheer better than Martin Truegold.

CLOVELLY JACK.—Ay, the truest heart and the rarest pilot between Plymouth Sound and the Land's End. *I* for one owe my life to Martin Truegold. Only last voyage home our ship would have gone to pieces on the Eddystone Rock, and eighty honest lads fed the fishes, but for Martin's seamanship.

TOM OF BIDEFORD.—And the ale he sells—how it warms a wrecked seaman's heart when he's shipped too much salt water aboard him. But hark ye, Dick (*to* MERRYWEATHER), is it true that our captains are coming to do him honour on his marriage-day?

DICK.—Coming! I warrant ye, lad. There's my own commander, Frank Drake—*Sir* Francis, I mean—God bless him!—and Captain Walter Raleigh, and old Hawkins, and all the jolly sea-dogs whose ships are moored in the Sound yonder. Nay, 'tis said the Lord Admiral himself has vowed to drink the bride's health, and take a turn in the bowling-match on the green.

TOM.—And who's the lass Martin takes for his wife?

DICK.—*Who*, mun! Why, doesn't thee know? But to be sure—I forgot, thou art just back from a three-years' cruise. Well, 'tis pretty Mabel, of Chudleigh Hall.

TOM.—What, that slip of a thing I left *so* high? I mind her well. An orphan lass she was, poor dear. Ah, many's the jolly rouse I've had with her father, Harry Langley, Sir Maurice Chudleigh's forester.

JACK.—Ay, truly, Sir Maurice Chudleigh. There be strange tales up at the Hall about Sir Maurice and——

DICK.—Ay, marry, and what tales, prythee?

JACK.—What tales! Why, that pretty Mabel had but to say "Yes!" to be Lady of Chudleigh—not *lawful* Lady, mind ye.

DICK.—Well, but you see she didn't say it. But mum, boys, Martin knows naught of this, and as he and Sir Maurice are foster-brothers, there must be no ill blood between them. But look, boys, look! There's Martin—there he is! (*pointing to the window of the Inn, at which* MARTIN *appears, his hat wreathed with flowers*).

MARINERS (*waving their caps*).—Hurrah! hurrah! for Martin Truegold!

MARTIN.—Thank ye, lads, thank ye. I'll be with you in the turning of an hour-glass. (*He leaves the window and enters from the door of the Inn. The sailors all crowd round him, cheering and shaking hands with him.*)

MARTIN.—Thank ye, thank ye, dear boys all; and hark ye—there's a runlet of Canary wine broaching on the bowling-green. Only I say, boys, you know I don't grudge the liquor, but as your noble captains honour me with their presence this happy day, why, you see, they'll look to *me* for the good behaviour of their crews.

MARINERS.—Ay, ay; never fear, Martin, never fear.

MARTIN.—Well, yonder's your way, lads (*pointing to the green*). There's a jolly ox turning on the spit; don't spare him—dip deep into *him*, but don't dip too deep into—— Ods me! it goes against me to say, "Spare my ale" on such a day as *this*, when you're all my guests, only you see——

DICK.—Well, Martin, lad?

MARTIN.—Well, Dick, here it is: 'twas but yesterday says your Captain Frank Drake, *Sir* Francis Drake I mean: "Martin," says he, "look to the ale-butts to-morrow. Hawks are abroad, and steady's the word."

DICK (*whistling*).—Phew! Frank may keep his

breath to cool his porridge. Hawks abroad! Spanish falcons belike. But never fear, Martin. I, Dick Merryweather, will look to the revels while you keep your tryst with pretty Mabel in the church yonder. (*A marriage-peal is heard in the distance.*) Hark! there go the bells. Ding, dong—ding, dong! Ah! that's the way they went for me twenty years gone and past. And, i' faith, Dame Merryweather keeps the peal going in my ears still, only it's her own clapper ding-donging, and not the church-bells'. But cheerly, my hearts: if the hawks *are* abroad, why, the watch-dogs are at home.

[*Exeunt* DICK *and the rest to the bowling-green.*

MARTIN (*looking after them*).—Ay, ay, friend Dick; but the watch-dogs must be ready to *bite* as well as *bark*.

WALLET, *the pedler* (*rising from the table*).—Right, my good host, and they may need all their teeth; but now for my reckoning.

MARTIN.—Put up your purse, master pedler; there are no reckonings at the old "Pelican" to-day.

WALLET.—No reckonings!

MARTIN.—No! 'Tis my marriage-day, and all who seek my roof-tree, neighbours or strangers, are my guests, but guests against whom I mark no score.

WALLET.—Good fortune then to the "Pelican," and all who live under its roof-tree! But I must be trudging (*taking up his staff*). By the way, have you one Sir Maurice Chudleigh living hereabouts?

MARTIN.—You must know little of this part of Devon, friend, to ask such a question; but if 'tis to seek customers for your wares at Chudleigh Court, you may e'en spare your legs.

WALLET.—What! have all its inmates then turned Puritans, and forsworn the vanities of laces and silver bodkins?

MARTIN.—Not so, but you may find a better market by stopping where you are. Sir Maurice Chudleigh, pedler, is my foster-brother, and will ere long grace my wedding with his presence. With him come most of his serving-men to foot it merrily to pipe and tabour, and when that's the case——

WALLET.—Why, the lasses are sure to follow! I under-

stand. And look, yonder comes one who means to be first at the merrymaking (*looks towards the rocks at the back*). Why, the girl runs like a hare before the hounds.

MARTIN (*looking the same way*).—Body o' me! 'tis Marah! What makes her crowd all sail in that fashion? (*A shot heard without.*) Ha! the cowardly lubbers! Would they slay the girl? (*He runs towards the back, and is met by* MARAH, *who bounds down the rocks. She is dressed in a wild, semi-oriental costume, her feet bare, a scarlet scarf wound round her head: a leathern girdle with a pouch and knife encircles her waist. She carries a cross-bow in her hand.*)

MARAH.—Help, help, dear master! Save me, save me!

MARTIN.—Never fear, my girl; thou'rt in safe harbour now. But art hurt? There's blood upon thee.

MARAH.—No, no, the ball only grazed my cheek—no thanks to them, though. But I know the hand that fired the shot. May the blight of Eblis wither it! May——

MARTIN.—There, there; no curses, girl; they're ugly mouthfuls, and they break no bones. But who's in chase of thee? What hast thou done?

MARAH.—Done! why, nothing. I was out yonder, getting dry fuel for the Beacon, when there comes wheeling over my head a bird—this pigeon (*showing a pigeon*); so I let fly at it with my crossbow, and——

MARTIN.—And brought it down, of course. Well?

MARAH.—Well, I did but run to pick it up, when Hugh Fletcher, Sir Gilbert Trevannion's serving-man, and three or four more swash-bucklers to back him, bade me leave it alone, for a gipsy thief as I was. "Thief in your teeth," says I; "the bird's mine!" With that they tried to grapple me; I ducked, and ran for it. And then—— But look, look—they're here! (*She runs behind* MARTIN.)

Enter down the rocks FLETCHER, SIMON LYNN, *and three other retainers of* SIR GILBERT TREVANNION. *They all carry a white cock's feather in their caps, and have small bucklers at their backs.*

HUGH FLETCHER.—There she is, Simon! there she is! Come forth, thou young witch of Egypt!

MARTIN.—Belay there, my masters. This girl is my

servant, and I'll bring the dust out of the first man's doublet who lays a finger on her without my permission.

SIMON LYNN.—Let her give up the bird, then. Throw it here, thou gipsy quean, or——

MARTIN.—And why? The bird is none of thine.

HUGH FLETCHER.—The bird is our master's, Martin Truegold—our master, Sir Gilbert Trevannion. Come, come! you know me well enough (*touching the white feather in his cap*). You know my badge.

MARAH.—Ay, well doth he know it, thou craven knave! Thou hast shown the *white feather* too often for folks not to know how well the badge suits thee.

HUGH FLETCHER (*raising the arquebus he carries*).—Imp of Satan, curb thy tongue! Stand aside, Martin Truegold.

MARTIN.—Not at *thy* bidding. But I want no brawling. Marah, give me the bird. Now you say this pigeon is your master's?

SIMON LYNN.—Ay; we saw it flying from his dovecots.

MARAH (*to* MARTIN).—He lies, master! he lies! The bird came from over the sea—ever so far away. I saw it, a mere speck, long before I shot it.

SIMON LYNN (*drawing his sword*).—Seaward or landward, we'll have the bird. Fall on, my masters! fall on!

[MARTIN *tosses the bird to* MARAH, *and snatching the staff from* WALLET, *keeps them at bay. At this point* DANGERFIELD *the priest, dressed as a merchant, enters.*

DANGERFIELD.—Hold, there! *You* retainers of Sir Gilbert Trevannion, put up your weapons; and you, Martin Truegold, brawling on your marriage-day! For shame! And for what? That wretched bird!

HUGH FLETCHER (*aside to* DANGERFIELD).—We must have it. There are weighty reasons.

DANGERFIELD (*to* FLETCHER *aside*).—I know them. You shall have the bird, but begone; I command it.

HUGH FLETCHER (*sulkily*).—As you will. It's your affair now; we wash our hands of it. (*Exeunt* FLETCHER *and the rest.*)

MARAH (*looking after them*).—Ay, go your ways! By the bright Welkin (*raising her crossbow*), I've a mind to send a token after ye, shot for shot.

MARTIN.—Avast there, my girl! Don't waste your bolts on foul birds. You've got your own; let the matter rest (*returning the staff to* WALLET).

DANGERFIELD.—Wisely said. I saw this fray from the beginning, and yonder knaves pressed, I doubt not, an unjust claim. Let me heal this graze upon thy cheek, my girl. Here's a silver angel for thy quarry. Let me have the bird.

WALLET.—Nay, an it come to purchase, *I've* a fancy for the bird, so here are *two* silver angels for thee, my pretty dark-skin.

DANGERFIELD (*looking at him*).—Why, what wouldst thou do with it, friend?

WALLET (*laughing*).—Do with it? Why, broil it for supper! What else should I do with it? Come, is't a bargain?

MARTIN.—No; not while she can make a better. Here are *three* silver angels for thee, my girl. The bird's mine. (*Takes the pigeon, and, after examining it, flings it back to* MARAH.) And *now* 'tis pluck'd, keep the bird for thine own supper. I take it, I've got the kernel of the nut.

DANGERFIELD (*anxiously*).—What! that slip of parchment?

MARTIN.—Ay, this slip of parchment tied under the bird's wing!

DANGERFIELD.—It bears, I see, some writing. Shall I read the message?

MARTIN.—No, thank ye. I'll read it myself (*looking at the parchment, and turning it various ways*). Hum!

WALLET.—Well?

MARTIN.—Well, there's a shoal in the way. Were it plain English sailing, I think I'm scholar enough to steer through it; but this is foreign shore.

WALLET.—Let *me* see the scroll. I pretend to no scholarship; but I've carried my pack in foreign lands, and—— Yes, this is Spanish tongue.

MARTIN (*to* WALLET).—Spanish! then render me the matter, friend; and on your life, see you do it truly, or——

WALLET.—A man can but do his best; and this, in plain English, is what I make of it. (*Reads.*)

"*The sharks are gathering, but they need a pilot fish to guide them to their prey. Find him, send him, without*

delay. A collar of jewels shall circle his neck, and every scale on his body be turned to gold."

MARTIN.—A pilot fish! A collar of jewels circle his neck! A hempen cord for the traitor's throat, say I! See you the gist of this, sirs?

DANGERFIELD.—Why, scarcely. It smacks of Bedlam, to my thinking. Sharks and pilot fishes, and collars of jewels——

MARTIN.—And *Spanish ships* hovering on our shores, and an English pilot—could so foul a fiend be found?—to take them safely through the rocks and shallows of this coast, that fire and sword may rage over old England through the length and breadth of the land. Thus *I* read the riddle.

DANGERFIELD.—And if you read it truly, Sir Gilbert Trevannion, as governor of Plymouth Citadel, should at once possess this scroll. Commit it to my keeping.

MARTIN.—Under favour, no; it rests in mine. (*He draws from his breast a small leathern bag suspended round his neck by a black ribbon.*) There, side by side by the first gift of my own dear Mabel, a lock of her dear hair, lie thou safe. (*Folds and places the parchment in the bag.*)

DANGERFIELD.—As you will (*aside*). I would he clutched the Upas poison to his breast, but at least we are forewarned. (*Retires.*)

MARTIN (*to* MARAH).—And now, thou wild Will-o'-the-Wisp, is this the way thou gracest my wedding-day? Where is thy new kirtle? Where are thy *shoes*—thy shoes, to which dear Mabel put the blue roses to make thee smart withal?

MARAH.—All safe. Don't be angry, master. The kirtle was all too tight; and for the shoes—you might as well shoe a sea-gull, and expect it to be happy. But don't look grave; I'll put them on again, though they were made of steel.

MARTIN.—Nay, thou shalt have no such hard measure as that, thou brown rogue. (*Shouts of laughter heard from the green.*) Um! Dick is forgetting his watch on the black-jack. Slip thee in, girl, amongst the mariners yonder, and if thou see'st the pottle-pot going round too freely, set one or two of the ale casks running, and let the ground,

this thirsty weather, have a share of the liquor. Don't stare, but go. What! dost fear they'll beat thee?

MARAH (*laying her hand on her knife*).—Beat me! they'd best not.

MARTIN.—Pshaw! girl, use thy tongue—it's sharp enough. Besides, what if I tell thee to take a cuff or two to please me?

MARAH.—To please *you?* Why, then they may scourge the flesh from my bones if they will (*kissing his hand*). It's *your* bidding, and it shall be done. (*Exit to the green.*)

WALLET.—By the Rood! your unkempt handmaid, mine host, is somewhat of a young Saracen both in mood and visage.

MARTIN.—Ay; the neighbours call her "Flash-o'-fire." The girl is of gipsy blood, quick in temper, but would go to the death to serve me. 'Twas my chance some years ago to save her mother from some rabble knaves who would have hanged the poor creature by the roadside. Well, I stopped that gear, and took her and her brown imp home to my fireside. She didn't live long. And I tried to train her brat to—what you see I can't make her do. She can run like a deer, swim like a duck, dive like an otter, climb like a wild cat, split a willow wand at a hundred yards with a bolt from her crossbow; but I *can't* make her wear shoes like a Christian!

WALLET (*laughing*).—Nay, if her faith rests with her shoe-leather, the young pagan is treading a better path already; for here she comes again, blue roses and all.

Re-enter MARAH *from the green.*

MARAH.—I've done it, master. I've done it! I've set all the taps running. And see! I've got 'em on (*showing her shoes*); and—and all for the honour of—your marriage-day. Dick Merryweather, though, flung the black-jack at my head.

MARTIN.—Did he? Not till he'd emptied it, I warrant me. But save you, master pedler (*rustic music*); I hear the pipes and tabours, and yonder comes my best-man to fetch me. Look, Marah!

MARAH (*with a sigh*).—Yes, yonder they come. (*Aside.*) I would Hugh Fletcher had sent the bullet through my heart.

MARTIN.—Hullo, what ails thee, wench? I see—the shoes pinch thee. Well, off with 'em!

MARAH.—No, no, master, there's nought the matter. (*Aside.*) He little knows where *the pain lies* (*placing her hand on her heart*).

MARTIN.—Well, as you will, lass. And now to don my marriage doublet. (*Enters the Inn.*)

[*Rustic music. Enter a party of the townspeople of Plymouth in their holiday dresses, headed by* MARTIN'S *Best-Man; they form in two lines, the men on one side, the women on the other. They all carry boughs, which they cross, forming an avenue. Re-enter* MARTIN *from the Inn, in his bridegroom's doublet, doffing his hat. He passes with his Best-Man under the avenue. At the same time* DICK *and the* MARINERS *enter from the green, and follow the party off, cheering and waving their hats.* MARAH *looks after them for a moment—covers her face with her hands—then, with an effort recovering herself, she runs to the porch of the Inn, over which grows a climbing rose, plucks one of the flowers, presses it to her lips, and flings it after the bridegroom.*

MARAH (*observing* DANGERFIELD'S *eyes fixed on her*).—Yes! the gipsy girl with that flower sends her blessing and the blessing of her tribe on the path of him who goes to meet his bride.

DANGERFIELD.—And the tears that glitter on those dark lashes, are they tears of joy?

MARAH (*angrily*).—What's that to you? Yet mark, you who watch so closely. (*She takes a bolt from her pouch and snaps it in two; then going to the table at which* WALLET *had sat, she raises a horn partly filled with wine, and pours the contents at her feet.*) You saw what I did with that bolt? May the schemes of all who wish ill to Martin Truegold be so broken and brought to naught. And as I spilled that wine upon the earth, so may their hearts' blood be poured out who would work him evil! (*She looks fixedly at the priest, and enters the Inn.*)

WALLET (*looking after her*).—By my faith! a very daughter of Mahound and Termagant. But what an eye the girl has! Were the custom allowed, Will Shakspeare

might train her for the stage, and make her play his Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt.*

DANGERFIELD (*scanning* WALLET).—Art thou as learned in stage-plays, friend, as thou art in foreign tongues? Where didst thou learn Spanish?

WALLET (*lowering his voice*).—At St. Omer. Pedlers, like Jesuits, wander over many lands.

DANGERFIELD.—Fellow, you are not what you seem.

WALLET.—Well, few of us are now-a-days. Tut! we lose time; we are here on the same errand.

DANGERFIELD.—Prove it.

WALLET (*producing a ring*).—This ring should do so. Methinks I see its fellow on your finger.

DANGERFIELD (*aside*).—'Tis our device! This signet bears the symbol of an *Arrow*, but it wants a motto. Can you suppy it?

WALLET (*looking cautiously about him*).—"*The Bow is bent and the Shaft is coming!*" Does Geoffrey Dangerfield require further proof?

DANGERFIELD (*sternly*).—Yes! a discreet tongue. *Here* I am Adam Musgrave, merchant of York, and thou——

WALLET.—Oh! I too have a travelling name; it's on my pack: "Mark Wallet, Trader in Velvet, Broadcloth, Laces, Silver Bodkins," and another commodity, in which brother merchant, I think we both have dealings—High Treason, amongst other trifles.

DANGERFIELD.—This is no time to jest. Whither goest thou?

WALLET (*shouldering his pack*).—To show my wares—Sir Gilbert Trevannion, he who is keeper of Plymouth Citadel. Will he traffic with me? or must I seek elsewhere for a market?

DANGERFIELD.—No; seek Sir Gilbert. Say to him the hour for which we all wait is at hand.

WALLET.—And you?

DANGERFIELD.—I have work to do here.

WALLET.—May it prosper, as it deserves! Will you

* It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to say that the pedler alludes to the fact of women never appearing on the stage in the days of Elizabeth. The female characters were always sustained by boys.

deign to aid me with this buckle? And now, in true pedler guise and fashion, the pedler's ditty must help me on my way (*singing as he adjusts the straps of his pack*). So it's—

"Over the moorland, and over the lea,
The packman he comes from the fair, oh!
I trow never guest is more welcome than he
Whenever he calls with his ware, oh!"

How shall I best gain the citadel?

DANGERFIELD (*pointing to the rocks at the back*).—By that path. Keep to the top of the cliff.

WALLET (*as he ascends the rocks*).—

"For dames must have kirtles and kerchiefs so fine,
And their husbands in hosen go share, oh!
While ribbons for headgear and gewgaws that shine,
Maidens need for their bonny brown hair, oh!"

(*Turning as he gains the top.*) By *this* path, then? (*pointing with his staff*).

DANGERFIELD.—Yes. But be wary, friend; the footway runs somewhat near the edge of the precipice, so look to your steps.

WALLET (*with a laugh*).—Wary! Never fear. I'll be as wary as a cat, cautious as a mule, and—prudent as a Jesuit. But thanks for the warning. It behoves us *both* to be mindful of the path we tread. *One* false step, one stumble, and death yawns for us in the abyss beneath. Farewell; ere long thou shalt know how the packman has sold his wares. (*Exit.*)

"Over the moorland and over the lea," &c.

[*The song dies away in the distance.*

DANGERFIELD (*looking after him*).—Is it undue suspicion or truthful instinct bids me mistrust that man? He bears the token, gives the watchword, knows my holy calling, and yet why is it each time I looked upon him there rose again, through the long mist of years, the pale and awful face of *him* who perished in the market-place of Oxford—that haunting face so calmly terrible amidst the devouring flames, that even now—— This is weak. He died, as all who

war against our sacred cause *should* die, and for this man ——No matter; fruition is so near, even were he false, he cannot harm us (*looking off*). Ay, speed along, master of Chudleigh! Envy and jealousy have fixed their poisonous talons on thy heart, and, fly as thou wilt, thou canst not rid thee from their clutch (*retires*). So, a fitting instrument to aid the work.

Enter SIR MAURICE CHUDLEIGH *hurriedly.*

SIR MAURICE (*not at once perceiving the priest*).—Not here? Methought I saw him.

DANGERFIELD (*coming forward*).—Of whom is Sir Maurice Chudleigh in search?

SIR MAURICE.—Of thee, holy father. I sought *thee.*

DANGERFIELD.—And being found—— But how's this? My son, what moves thee thus?

SIR MAURICE.—Priest! thou knowest the secret of my heart. They are wedded. Mabel Langley is——

DANGERFIELD.—Now the wife of Martin Truegold, our honest pilot of Plymouth Hoe. Kind *will* to kind. 'Tis fitting the daughter of a churl should wed a churl.

SIR MAURICE.—Ay, 'tis well for thee to smile so calmly. But beware! there is a frenzy in my brain may tempt me——

DANGERFIELD.—Never to forget, I trust, I am Sir Maurice Chudleigh's friend. If I look joyful, it is (*lowering his voice*) that joyful, glorious news has come.

SIR MAURICE.—What! mean you—— This marriage, then, even now may——

DANGERFIELD (*scornfully*).—Now, by my holy order! this is worthy of a love-sick boy—not of a man.—Sir Maurice Chudleigh, I tell thee by to-morrow's sun the swelling sails of Spain's long-promised Armament will be off these shores (*laying his hand on* CHUDLEIGH'S *shoulder*). Ay, and our Spanish friends, it seems, require a pilot.

SIR MAURICE.—A pilot!

DANGERFIELD.—And who so rare a one as Martin Truegold?

SIR MAURICE.—Martin! *He* aid the Spaniards!

DANGERFIELD.—Not willingly, perhaps; but once safe on board a Spanish galleon, may not even Martin Truegold yield to—persuasion?

SIR MAURICE (*after a slight pause*).—Ay, the persuasion of the rack. Father, this man has robbed me of Mabel's love, yet still——

DANGERFIELD.—Thou wouldst rather he slept to-night beneath his own roof-tree than between the decks of the Spanish ship, *La Santa Fé*. Well, his bride might miss him.

SIR MAURICE.—Priest! what would you?

DANGERFIELD.—That you listen calmly. Moored at the foot of this cliff, and reached by a path leading from the bowling-green, lies a small vessel, of which thou art the master.

SIR MAURICE.—Well?

DANGERFIELD.—As night draws on, Welford and other faithful gentlemen will join in these revels; then, when Martin's guests have bidden him farewell, we bear him to the boat.

SIR MAURICE.—And if he resist?

DANGERFIELD (*drawing a small phial from his vest*).—Here is a talisman shall tame him, stalwart as he is. A few drops from this phial mingled in his wine shall at once benumb every energy, fetter every limb. Then, ere dawn, with me for helmsman, Martin Truegold awakes amidst the Spanish squadrons.

SIR MAURICE.—And Mabel?

DANGERFIELD.—Well, if she weep for her lost bridegroom, Sir Maurice Chudleigh should know how to console her.

SIR MAURICE (*passionately*).—Art thou man, or tempting devil, who would mesh me thus within thy net?

DANGERFIELD.—A man, Sir Maurice—a man! frailer in body than thyself, but with a devotion for the cause he serves that gives him a giant's strength to bear him through his task. I tell thee, were it required, I would give this body to the flames as freely as thou wouldst array thyself for a Court Masque. But see (*music*), the bridal troop throngs this way. Let us mingle with the crowd. (*They retire.*)

[*The chorus of the* MARINERS *is heard without. Enter in bridal procession* MARTIN *and* MABEL, *preceded by young girls strewing flowers,* MARINERS, *Townspeople,*

Morris-dancers, male and female, &c. &c. As the procession enters, EFFINGHAM, *attended by* SIR FRANCIS DRAKE, RALEIGH, *and other* CAPTAINS *of the Fleet, ascends from the beach.* MARTIN, *leading* MABEL *by the hand, advances to* EFFINGHAM. *They both kneel to him.*

MARTIN.—My lord—Mabel, my wife.

EFFINGHAM.—Up, Martin Truegold, up! And thou too, my pretty mistress (*raising her*). I had rather so rosy a cheek should be nearer to my lips—With your own and your husband's leave (*he kisses her*). And now, my host of the "Pelican," ere we begin our bowling-match, let me try the merits of your good Canary.

MARTIN.—All is prepared, my lord; the tables are laid upon the green.

EFFINGHAM.—Nay, honest Martin, let me fill a cup *here*. I have a health to give before this company.

[MARTIN *is about to fetch the wine.* MABEL *stops him.*

MABEL.—Nay, Martin, if it be his lordship's pleasure, let me begin my duty, as the hostess of the "Pelican," by having the honourable task of serving him; that is (*with a curtsey*), my lord permitting.

[EFFINGHAM *makes a sign of assent; and* MABEL, *going into the Inn, returns quickly with a salver, on which is a flask and one of the old long-necked glasses of the period. She pours out the wine, and offers it to* EFFINGHAM.

EFFINGHAM (*taking the glass*).—What say you, Captain Raleigh—need a man ever wish for a fairer Cupbearer?

RALEIGH.—By my word, I think not, my lord. A very Hebe! who not only presents you Nectar in her cup, but, as your lordship knows, carries it on her lips.

EFFINGHAM.—Nay, Walter, your courtly phrase calls too deep a blush upon the cheek of our hostess. 'Tis well, Sir Francis (*turning to* DRAKE). We all know how Walter Raleigh sails a ship, else we might scarcely think so rare a poet could be so good a seaman.

DRAKE.—I've naught to say against Captain Raleigh's seamanship; but for our pretty Bride here, all that Frank Drake would say is, that "Good wine needs no bush." And that's a proverb well suited to Martin's calling.

EFFINGHAM (*raising his glass*).—And reminds me that my task is yet undone. Townsmen of Plymouth, mariners of my fleet, I drink this wine to the health of Martin Truegold and his Bride. May they steer through life clear of rock and quicksand, and anchor at last in the smooth waters of a good old age!

MARINERS, &c., &c.—Hurrah! hurrah!

EFFINGHAM (*turning to his* CAPTAINS).—And now, gentlemen, have with ye to the bowling-green. And you, lads and lasses, whose bells are tinkling and whose feet are ready for a merry measure, fall to, and foot it your best for the honour of Devonshire. Strike up, Pipe and Tabour!

[EFFINGHAM *and the* CAPTAINS *pass to the Green, amidst the cheering of the* MARINERS, *while* MARTIN *leads* MABEL *to a seat slightly raised, and stands by her side: the seat is decorated with flowers. A party of Morris-dancers then advances. After saluting the bride and bridegroom, an old English Morris-dance is gone through. At this part of the action the evening appears to close in. Towards the conclusion of the dance a shout is heard, the dancers divide, and discover the figure of* FLEMING, *the rover, standing on the rocks at the back of the stage.* MARTIN *advances to him.*

MARTIN.—How now, brother? You give your Hail with a will, methinks. What would you?

FLEMING.—Instant speech with my Lord of Effingham. Where is the admiral?

MARTIN.—The admiral!

EFFINGHAM (*enters from the green*).—He is here. Who seeks the Admiral of England?

[EFFINGHAM *is followed by his* CAPTAINS. *All are without their doublets: some with bowls in their hands. They stand grouped round* EFFINGHAM, *the rays of the setting sun lighting up their figures.*

FLEMING.—My Lord of Effingham——

EFFINGHAM.—Hold, friend—gain thy breath awhile. Now, who art thou?

FLEMING.—A Scottish mariner, my lord—Fleming, the Rover.

EFFINGHAM.—Well, sir, thy errand?

FLEMING.—This: the Fleet of Spain, the great Armada, is bearing towards this port! [*A murmur and confusion.*

EFFINGHAM.—Where away, man?

FLEMING.—Off the Lizard Point, stretching like a huge Crescent—seven miles from horn to horn!

EFFINGHAM.—Is it so? To your ships then, gentlemen. Our bowling-match, it seems, must be played out some other time.

DRAKE (*advancing with his bowl in his hand*).—Under favour, not so, my lord. I say, "Play out the game!" There's time enough to finish the match, and beat the Spanish fleet afterwards!"

MARINERS.—Hurrah for England! hurrah for bold Drake!

EFFINGHAM.—Make the most of your daylight then, Sir Francis. For me, I shall aboard at once. (*Exeunt* DRAKE *and* RALEIGH, &c. &c., *back to green.*) Here, Martin (*tossing his bowl to* MARTIN), take my place, and win for me if you can. My cloak there! (*A sailor hands the Admiral his cloak, which he flings round him.*) Good even to ye, men of Devon (*turning before he descends to the beach*). The King of Spain, it seems, would challenge England to another bowling-match.

MARTIN.—To be played out on the Green Sea, my gracious lord; and with *you* to lead the game, I warrant me he gains naught but rubbers.

EFFINGHAM.—Let every landsman make ready his weapon, and muster horse and man; and you, Martin Truegold, when the stars twinkle, let your beacon Blaze.

MARTIN.—I warrant you, my lord, no hand but *mine* shall fire it. (*Exit* EFFINGHAM, *followed by a crowd of* MARINERS*cheering. The townspeople, morris-dancers, &c. &c., disperse in various directions, leaving only* MARTIN *and* MABEL *on the stage.*) Now, dear lass, run thee into the house and get me ready a lighted brand. I must try to make the winning cast for my lord's sake, and then the Old Beacon shall kindle a light on every English hill from shore to shore. Run——

MABEL.—It shall be the brightest I can find (*lingering*). Ah, Martin, dear——

MARTIN.—Well?

MABEL.—To think, now, that my first service to thee as a wife is to help thee save dear England from the foe.

MARTIN.—Thou pretty laggard, run and do my bidding, else I shall think thou art asking for thy wages before they're due.

MABEL.—What wages, Martin?

MARTIN (*kissing her*).—Why, this. Run, you rogue, run.

[*Exit* MABEL *into Inn.*

DRAKE, *and others without.*—Martin! Why, Martin, the game waits!

MARTIN.—I'm coming, your honours—I'm coming.

[*Exit to the bowling-green. At the same time,* DANGERFIELD, SIR MAURICE, WELFORD, TRACY, *and other conspirators enter. They are followed by* WALLET, *now without his pack: he stands a little apart.*

DANGERFIELD.—Gentlemen, there is but brief time for action. Sir Maurice, is your vessel ready—the rowers at their posts?

SIR MAURICE.—All is prepared.

DANGERFIELD (*looking towards the green*).—And see, yonder players have finished their game. (*A cheer heard.*) They have given the pilot a parting cheer, and don their doublets.

SIR MAURICE.—But the beacon——

DANGERFIELD.—Must not be fired; *this* shall prevent it (*holding up the phial he had previously showed to* CHUDLEIGH).

Re-enter from the green, DRAKE, RALEIGH, &c. &c., *followed by* MARTIN. *They shake hands with him, bidding him farewell.*

ALL.—Good night, honest Martin, good night.

[*Exeunt the* CAPTAINS.

MARTIN.—Good night to your honours, good night! Long life to yourselves, and victory to your ships. Now, Mabel, lass, the brand! the brand!

MABEL (*entering with the torch*).—Here, Martin, here; 'tis well kindled.

[DANGERFIELD *has approached the table on which is the flask and glass used by* EFFINGHAM. *He pours wine from the flask, and mingles with it the contents of the phial.*

DANGERFIELD (*giving the glass to* SIR MAURICE).—Now, ere he mounts the ladder; from *you* he will not refuse it.

SIR MAURICE (*advancing*).—Ho, there! Martin!

MARTIN (*surprised*).—Your honour! at this hour!

SIR MAURICE.—Why, 'tis not too late to wish thee joy, honest Martin.

MARTIN.—No, your honour; never too late for *that.*

SIR MAURICE.—Martin, you are about to give the signal that is to warn all England of her coming danger. Pledge me a health before you mount.

MARTIN (*preparing to ascend*).—When I'm down again, Sir Maurice, with right good will, but——

SIR MAURICE.—Nay, at once. What, man! when thy foster-brother asks thee? (*Forces the glass into* MARTIN'S *hand, and fills another for himself.*) To the Glory of England, and *may the Right Cause Triumph!* (*raising his glass*).

MARTIN.—Well, I can't refuse that. "To the Glory of England, and may the Right Cause Triumph!" (*Drinks wine. For a moment he remains motionless; then returning the glass to* SIR MAURICE, *he makes a step or two towards the beacon.*) What's this? (*raising his hand to his forehead.*) A mist gathers before my eyes. Mabel! Mabel, where art thou, lass? Take the brand, the—Beacon—I—— (*He drops the brand, which is immediately stamped out by* DANGERFIELD, *and staggering back, falls into the arms of one of the Conspirators*).

MABEL.—Martin! husband! Great Heaven! speechless, lifeless! (*Turning on* SIR MAURICE.) Villain! unknightly caitiff! this is *thy* work. Coward! was it for this I hid from my brave Martin the wrong thou wouldst have done him? Was it for this I sought to save from shame a noble House thy name dishonours? But thou shalt not triumph in thy work. Help, there! help, I say! Treason! treason to England! Ay, slay me if ye will! If ye have wrought

harm to *him*, to me ye can give no sweeter boon than death!

[*She falls at* MARTIN'S *feet.* MARAH *at this moment shows herself at the window, and disappears.*

TRACY (*drawing his poniard*).—Must she die?

DANGERFIELD (*approaching* MABEL). — No; she has swooned. Raise her, and bear her to the boat.

SIR MAURICE (*drawing his sword*).—*With him!* Never! Tracy, release her!

DANGERFIELD.—Peace! the cause requires *Both.* *Now* let them light their beacon if they can.

[*The Conspirators surround* MARTIN *and* MABEL, *keeping with their swords* CHUDLEIGH *from approaching. At that moment* MARAH *appears at the window of the Inn, with a lighted brand in her hand; she steps upon the beam, and crossing it, fires the fuel within the cresset of the Beacon.*

MARAH.—Dogs as ye are, 'tis done! and look, miles away, 'tis answered. See, from point to point the light leaps along the shore. Traitors, ye are baffled! (*As she speaks, the beacons on the distant headlands are seen to start into flame.*)

WELFORD.—Shoot the witch!

WALLET (*raising his hand*).—Hold! a shot now were madness; leave her to *me.* (*The Conspirators crowd round the beacon, brandishing their weapons.*)

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

THE SPANISH SHIP.

"The Spanish Ships sailed saucily,
Like Peacocks proud to see;
But their plumes were pluck'd, and their crests were cut,
When they *look'd* at this Coun-*tric*."

Devonshire Old Song.

Daybreak,—The main deck of the Spanish galleon-of-war, "La Santa Fé." Looking towards the head, showing the fore and mainmasts, the deck is crowded with Spanish Mariners, Soldiers, Monks, &c. Slightly on the right is a pile of cushions, behind which is planted the Standard of Spain. Near the cushions is a cannon, on the carriage of which is spread an embroidered cloth; on this are flagons and goblets of gold, an hour-glass, &c. Towards the bows of the vessel is a hatchway, supposed to communicate with the lower deck. Near the front, on a coil of rope,* MARAH *lies, apparently asleep.*

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

(*Monks, Mariners, Soldiers, &c., kneeling.*)

O sanctissima! O purissima!
Dulcis Virgo, Maria.
Mater amata, intemerata
Ora, ora pro nobis.

* The term "galleon" is given by some writers exclusively to the vessels employed by the Spaniards for the transport of bullion from their possessions in the New World. This is not quite correct. The largest Spanish ships-of-war were entitled galleons, and, being fighting-ships, were selected as efficient protectors of their precious freights.

[*At the conclusion of the hymn the Mariners, &c., rise, and* VALDEZ, *the Admiral, enters from his cabin. He is attired in black velvet, and wears the order of the Golden Fleece.* GOMEZ *and* SILVA, *partly in armour, follow him. He is also attended by two or three Ecclesiastics in rich vestments, and by* CHUDLEIGH, TRACY, *and* WELFORD. VALDEZ *advances to the cushions, and throws himself upon them. A Moorish female slave, holding a fan of feathers, stations herself near him. At the same time* WALLET *ascends from the lower deck. As he approaches* MARAH, *she springs up to meet him.*

MARAH.—Now, how fares it with him? Sleeps he still?

WALLET.—He hath stirred, and gazed about him, murmured a word or two; but the power of the drug still weighs him down.

MARAH (*placing her hand on his shoulder*).—What is it they would work against him? Evil, I know, but *what* evil? Speak!

WALLET.—Poor wench, to tell thee would avail but little. Thy master is in a net from which no skill of thine can free him.

MARAH (*bitterly*).—A net? Ay, a net thy hands have helped to fling about him. Yet no—I think thou art not his enemy. And, but for thy voice, yonder men would have killed me.

WALLET.—True, girl, thou ow'st me thus much. There were but two courses—either to slay thee or bring thee with them. Well, I thought thou wert too faithful and too young to die. And thou art here to share the fortunes of thy master. But say, hast thou friends on board this Spanish vessel? I saw thee hold converse with those slaves in Moorish garb now gathered on the lower deck.

MARAH.—Slaves they are not; they are of my own race; of gipsy blood—Gitanos of the land from whence these Spaniards come.

WALLET.—Gitanos?

MARAH.—Ay, brought here, they and the women of their tribe—wives, sisters, daughters, and for what? To make sport, with music and with dance, for *him* (*pointing*

to VALDEZ) and his brother tyrants. May the curse of our people light upon his head!

WALLET.—Speak lower, girl; yonder Spanish leader hath good knowledge of our English tongue. Should he chance to overhear thee——

MARAH (*shrugging her shoulders*).—He will have me cast to the fishes. What then? And yet no—I will not fling away my life: 'tis Marah's task to live and watch. Stay—give me thy hand (*after scanning it for a short time*). Yes, this should be an honest palm, for the lines run as they do in *his* whose life to me is—no matter. Stranger, we watch together. (*She turns away.*)

WALLET (*aside*).—Ay, live, watch, pursue! thou teachest me my own task.

DANGERFIELD *ascends from the lower deck.*

VALDEZ (*raising himself on his cushions*).—Well, holy father, what news dost thou bring? The prisoner?

DANGERFIELD.—Noble señor, the opiate still holds its influence, but in a brief space I trust——

VALDEZ (*starting up*).—Now, by our great patron, St. Iago! dost thou play with us, priest? We have demanded a skilful pilot who shall give present aid to our invincible Armada to descend with speed and safety on these English shores; and thou bringest us a drugged slave who—— Or doth the varlet dare deceive us, and feign the sluggard?

DANGERFIELD.—So please you, señor, the stars still glimmer in the east—'tis hardly morning; but ere another hour passes, this man shall stand before you ready to prove by his answers that I have not vaunted his skill unduly. If I speak falsely, let my own life pay the forfeit.

DE SILVA (*to* DANGERFIELD).—Why was this slumber cast upon him?

DANGERFIELD.—For reasons, señor, which we judged necessary to insure success.

GOMEZ.—Success! Mother of mercies! but *when?* We reckoned by this time the thunder of our cannon would have roused your port of Plymouth from its slumbers.

VALDEZ (*waving his hand*). Paciéncia, señors; it seems that we must wait. Where are our English guests?

(*turning to* SIR MAURICE *and his companions*). Gentlemen, I had hoped ere this to have set my foot on your English shores.

TRACY.—A second visit, as I think, noble señor?

VALDEZ.—Ay, truly, sir. My first was in more peaceful guise. I followed my noble master when he came to wed his English queen. These noble captains (*looking towards* GOMEZ *and* SILVA), as I remember, were also in his train. Those were the days when Spain had weight within your councils. Well had it been for England had she ever listened to our voice.

WELFORD.—But we, noble señor, *we* followers of the true faith, stand here to aid you build the shattered fabric again.

VALDEZ.—And you shall see it rise, sirs. For this holy purpose hath Spain sent forth her armaments upon these narrow seas; for this she gives her treasure and the noblest of her blood; and to that holy cause Diego de Valdez, by all his hopes of heaven, now dedicates his sword and life! (*He unsheathes his sword, kisses the blade, and raises it in attestation of his vow, the Conspirators and the Spanish Officers doing the same.* VALDEZ *turns to* WALLET.)

VALDEZ.—And thou, friend—thou art silent?

WALLET.—I am but a poor trader, noble señor, and bear no honourable sword like these cavaliers, on which I could record my vow.

VALDEZ.—But thy heart?

WALLET (*raising his hand*).—Prays as earnestly for the true cause as thine.

VALDEZ (*to* DANGERFIELD).—Art thou warrant for this man?

DANGERFIELD.—He bears the token, señor, which should be warrant for his truth: 'tis time must prove it.

WALLET.—Does not this hour prove it? else why should I be here?

[DANGERFIELD *descends.*

VALDEZ.—Enough! (*throwing himself again on the cushions*). By the shrine of Compostella! but the time hangs wearily. How say you, gentlemen? Shall we beguile the minutes while we wait the coming of your

laggard pilot? Our Gitanos, our gipsy slaves,* they shall tread you one of the wild measures of their tribe. (*He makes a sign to the Moorish slave who stands near him. She descends.*) In the meantime honour me by pledging me in this wine of Alicant. If 'twill add a zest to your draught, know that the gold of your goblets once enriched Peru's proud Temple of the Sun, and that your cup-bearers are captive princes.

[*The wine is poured out, and served kneeling by two Peruvian slaves, richly attired in their dresses of feather-work, bracelets, and anklets of gold.* VALDEZ *pledges the Englishmen, which they return. A wild strain of music is heard, and a troop of Gitanos, male and female, ascend from the lower deck. They are dressed in semi-oriental costume, carrying cymbals, tambourines, and castanets. They form a line, bend low before* VALDEZ, *and go through a picturesque dance. Suddenly the distant sound of cannon is heard.* VALDEZ *rises, and makes a sign for the dance to cease.*

VALDEZ (*to the Englishmen*).—Hark ye, gentlemen! Hear ye that? Your island mastiffs are barking. Recalde† must be engaged. Well (*to* DANGERFIELD, *who has re-ascended*), the prisoner—wakes he yet?

DANGERFIELD.—Yes, noble señor; the stupor which so long hath bound his senses is shaken off.

* Our worthy and humorous friend *Fun*, in a most good-natured notice of this drama, pronounced the introduction of this dance, and, in fact, the presence of gipsy slaves at all on board the Spanish ship, an absurdity. The objection was a very reasonable one; but there is something to be said on the other side. Our Spanish invaders came with the full expectation of certain victory, and with the express intention of taking up their abode in England. A curious record of what some of the Spanish ships contained is to be found in Creasy's interesting work, "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World." It shows that our enemies brought with them everything that could minister to their luxurious desires—their vessels of gold and silver, their costly carpets, and their slaves. Moreover, the treasures of Mexico and Peru had done their enervating work. I therefore considered myself justified in making a luxurious and haughty Hidalgo command the presence of his slaves to beguile the time which hung wearily upon him.

† The Marquis Recalde was the Admiral-in-Chief of the Armada.

VALDEZ.—Bring him forth, then! (*At a signal from* DANGERFIELD, MARTIN, *attended by two soldiers, ascends*).—So, at last. Englishman, knowest thou in whose presence thou art standing?

[MARTIN, *who is very pale, and somewhat bewildered, pauses a little before he replies.*

MARTIN.—Presence! Well, I reckon I see the commander of this vessel—and a strange craft she is! What would you with me?

VALDEZ.—Thou shalt know presently; it is for thee to listen and to answer. Thy name?

MARTIN.—Martin Truegold, of Plymouth Hoe.

VALDEZ.—Thou art, it is said, a skilful pilot?

MARTIN.—Well, I believe there are worse.

VALDEZ.—Now hearken, Englishman! This flag (*pointing to the standard*) is the banner of my master, King Philip of Spain; and I, his faithful subject, have sworn to plant it, ere yonder sun has reached its noontide height, within the heart of your good town of Plymouth.

MARTIN (*looking full at him*).—Well, plant it—if you *can.*

VALDEZ.—Ay, but we shall need your counsel.

MARTIN.—My counsel! Well, if you are wise, don't try.

VALDEZ.—Ha! why not?

MARTIN.—Marry, because they who plant that flagstaff in English ground are likely to find it a tree that will bear sour fruit.

VALDEZ.—Heretic dog! dost thou bandy words with me?

MARTIN.—Nay, you have asked for counsel, and you shall have it. Look ye! you are a Spanish gentleman. You come of a race whose deeds men speak of as pitiless and bloody; but I have heard that you are proud, and value your honour better than your lives. Well, if that be so, let me tell you your good name is like to suffer by the company you keep (*looking towards the Conspirators*).

VALDEZ.—How now, sirrah? Rule your tongue!

MARTIN.—Why should I? It owes *thee* no allegiance. If you like not my speech, send me back from whence you brought me. But first—cleanse your ship from vermin

(*pointing to* DANGERFIELD *and the rest*), and hang me those four traitors from the yard-arm. *One*, Heaven send us grace (*pointing to* SIR MAURICE CHUDLEIGH), writes himself "*Knight!*" so give *him* a halter of silk to mark his title!

VALDEZ.—Your patience (*to* SIR MAURICE, *who lays his hand on his sword*). Thou art a bold knave; but remember where thou art. Thou standest on the deck of *La Santa Fé!* Thou speakest to Diego de Valdez, to whose command is given full twenty galleons of this armament. I have vowed this ship shall be the first of my squadron to enter your port; and you, who know every sunken rock, every sandbank that may throw peril in our way, must guide us safely through them.

MARTIN.—And if I said "yes" to your bidding, what think you should be my reward?

VALDEZ.—Thyself shalt name it.

MARTIN (*fiercely*).—A halter, then—a halter, only twenty feet higher than those of your friends there: such were fitting wage for such a service.

VALDEZ.—Nay, thou shalt have better guerdon. See'st thou this jewel on my finger? This gem is worthy of a prince's coronet. With it (*touching the collar round his neck*), this chain of gold and pearl is thine. These will I bestow at once upon thee, with future honours and rewards, so thou perform thy service faithfully. All these I promise thee on the faith, the honour of a Castilian gentleman.

MARTIN.—Ay, I have often heard of that same Castilian honour; but what's to become of mine, I'd like to know?

VALDEZ.—Thy honour, churl!

MARTIN.—Ay, *my* honour. I hope I've got such a thing about me, even though I don't write *Don* before my name.

VALDEZ (*sternly*).—Thy answer!

MARTIN.—My answer! Well, if you want to get into Plymouth Port, it wont be with *my* seamanship, and that's a plain answer.

VALDEZ.—Beware, slave! What if I stretch thee on the rack, and wrench from thee compliance? We *have* such engines with us.

MARTIN (*half aside*).—Oh, the devil doubt you (*to*

VALDEZ). Well, if you have them, 'tis better you try their strength on these joints than work your cruel will on friends at home.

VALDEZ.—Then thou defiest me?

MARTIN.—Defy thee! No; but if you will torture me, you *must*. For *me*, I must pray Heaven to give me strength to bear the pain. Better I die under it than give you help to light again our Smithfield fires.

VALDEZ.—We will try thy courage. (*He turns and makes a sign; several soldiers advance to seize* MARTIN.)

DANGERFIELD (*to* VALDEZ).—A moment yet. His wife—he knows not of her presence. Command that she ascend—it may avail us much.

VALDEZ (*motioning the soldiers back*).—True, I had forgotten her. (*He gives a command to the Moorish slave, who descends.*)

MARAH (*who has watched the whole of the interview, addresses* WALLET).—What is't they purpose? Had they laid hands on him, yonder proud Spaniard's life should have paid the forfeit (*laying her hand on her knife*).

WALLET.—Silence! 'tis Heaven alone can aid him. Watch and wait.

[*The Moorish slave re-ascends, followed by* MABEL, *guarded: she advances slowly, until* MARTIN, *suddenly perceiving her, staggers back.*

MABEL (*rushing to him*).—Martin! husband!

MARTIN (*suddenly grasps a battle-axe, which lies on a coil of ropes and catches* MABEL *to his breast*).—Mabel! Mabel! cling close to me, lass, close! Stand back! The first man who comes to take her from me, I'll cleave him to the shoulder!

VALDEZ (*to the soldiers*).—Fuego!

[*The soldiers present their arquebuses.*

MARTIN (*dropping the axe*).—Hold, Spaniard, hold! there, there, take her. I know you wont harm *her;* you *couldn't;* a mere girl, you see; you couldn't have the heart to—my wife—your honour—my wife——

VALDEZ.—Thy wife.

MABEL (*falling on her knees to* VALDEZ).—Yes, noble

sir, his wife; married but yesterday; and oh, so happy! What hath my husband done to you or yours, that you should drag him from his home? Ah, send him back, noble señor, or hold him to fair ransom. He hath friends, noble friends, who will redeem him; *indeed, indeed* they will.

VALDEZ.—He may redeem himself and *thee* if he so will it. Woman, dost thou love thy husband?

MABEL.—Ah, señor!

VALDEZ.—If thou wouldst have him *live*, bid him be speedy to do the task that I have set him.

MABEL (*rises and approaches* MARTIN).—Martin, Martin dear, this task—what is it?

MARTIN.—Mabel, they—they would—— (*He turns away, and buries his face in his hands.*)

DANGERFIELD (*to* MABEL).—All that is asked of him is *this*—that he should guide this vessel's course——

MARTIN (*recovering himself*).—To our home, Mabel, to our home. They would ask *me—me*, an English pilot—to bring this ship to anchor in our roadstead; and for what? To lay, perchance, our town in ashes—to be the leader of all that fleet of Spain—of Spain! whose soldiers, if they land, will work on English men and women what they have worked on those poor Hollanders, whose misery thou hast so often wept for. This is the task they set me, Mabel. *This* is the deed they ask of Martin Truegold: to play the traitor to the land that gave him birth, and yield it up to fire, sword, and shame! Mabel! wife! *This* is the ransom he must pay to buy his life. What think you should have been his answer?

MABEL (*half bewildered*). — Husband! Martin! thy answer?

MARTIN (*looking intently at her*).—Well?

MABEL (*passionately*).—Martin, thou *hast* answered. I *know* thou hast. And answered—God help me!—as I would have thee do. Yes! better thy Life than peril on *thy* Soul! (*She rushes to him, and flings herself on his breast.*)

VALDEZ.—Heretic, I have proffered thee fair terms. Now mark (*raising an hour-glass from the gun-carriage*). Some few grains of sand have yet to run their course

within this hour-glass. Watch well these glittering atoms: if, when they cease to glide, I find thee obstinate, I fling that woman over my ship's side into the waves; yet that were too great a grace. What if I bind her to the mast, and bid my archers make her fair body a target for their shafts?

[*The sky up to this time has gradually become overcast, flashes of lightning are occasionally seen, and the thunder mutters in the distance.*

SIR MAURICE (*laying his hand on his sword*).—Don Diego, Señor de Valdez, this must not be. Gentlemen (*turning to* WELFORD *and* TRACY), permit not so foul a deed.

VALDEZ (*to* SIR MAURICE).—Sir, on the deck of *La Santa Fé* no will is heard but mine.

[*A vivid flash, succeeded by the loud roll of thunder, follows his words.*

MABEL (*turning to him*).—Not so, not so, Man! the voice of Heaven is raised against thy wickedness. Martin, think not of me; think of our poor England; think of dear friends, of poor helpless creatures, old men, women slaughtered by these ravening wolves; think of dear little children tossed from pike to pike. What we know these men *have* done they will do again. Keep thy heart strong, Martin, and Mabel Truegold will show these Spaniards how an English wife can die.

VALDEZ (*turning the hour-glass*).—Is thy choice made? Speak, and quickly! Is it death or life?

MARTIN (*in a low voice*).—Mabel, Mabel, how sayest thou, lass? Shall it, shall it be death for England?

MABEL.—Yes; let their arrows come, so that I meet them *here*—here, upon thy breast!

VALDEZ.—Thy choice!

MARTIN (*fiercely*). — It is made! Death for England, death! *Now*, Spaniard, let your bowmen loose their shafts, and reach her heart through mine!

VALDEZ.—No, not together; that were to mar the work. Drag her to the mast!

MARTIN (*as* GOMEZ *and* SILVA *move to take* MABEL *from him*).—Hold, Spaniard, hold! I—I will take charge—I will direct thy helmsman, but let her stay by me: it's not much to ask.

VALDEZ.—To thy task, then. To Plymouth! Englishman——

MARTIN (*with a bitter smile*).—Ay, straight for Plymouth. Never fear; thy ship shall run upon her proper course. Starboard your helm there! You English traitors, make me understood.

DANGERFIELD (*to* DE SILVA, *who keeps directing the helmsman*).—Al baborde! al baborde!

MARTIN.—Helm a-starboard I say! So—so! Now she goes! Mabel, lass, rouse thee, rouse thee; 'tis Martin has thee on his heart.

MABEL (*faintly*).—Oh, Martin dear, better, better let me die.

MARTIN.—Starboard! starboard! keep her well away! Mabel (*lowering his voice to a deep whisper*), Mabel, look yonder ahead, a little to the left, my girl—wait for the next flash—there! there!—where the sea was boiling with foam, and the white spray flew so high into the air. *It is the Rock of Eddystone!* Kiss me; 'tis the last that we shall take. 'Tis *death*, my girl! but death in each other's arms!

MABEL.—With thee 'tis welcome. [*Thunder.*

VALDEZ.—Englishman, I like not the white crests of yonder billows. Santa Maria! how they gleam through the darkness! To the helm—to the helm thyself, I say!

MARTIN.—No! the helm hath done its duty; thy helmsman needs no aid. I tell thee *thy ship is on her proper course!* And may all thy fellow-bloodhounds follow on thy track!

VALDEZ (*half drawing his sword*).—Dog! what meanest thou?

MARTIN.—That you and every soul on board this ship are running on the jaws of Death! Spaniard, within your vessel's length lies the black reef of Eddystone!

DANGERFIELD (*rushing to the wheel*).—The helm! the helm! or we are lost!

MARTIN (*laughing wildly*).—Too late! too late! She strikes! she strikes!

[VALDEZ *rushes on* MARTIN *with his sword uplifted; but* MARAH, *springing between them, plunges her poniard into the Spaniard's breast. At the same moment the ship strikes with a tremendous crash. Almost all those on deck are thrown down. A cry of horror rises. The lightning striking the mast, it falls; and as the sea pours over the bulwarks of the vessel, the curtain falls.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

THE REEF OF EDDYSTONE.

"Oh, a terrible place was the Eddy-stone,
When thunder'd the surge on that Rock so lone,
And never a Lighthouse upon it shone,
To save poor souls from drowning!"

"The Dangers of the Sound," a Ballad.

The Reef of Eddystone; the Sea heaves sullenly around it. A wild sky, and lurid sunset. A portion of one of the masts of "La Santa Fé," with part of its rigging, lies across the rock. Towards the left of the reef MARTIN TRUEGOLD *is kneeling by the side of* MABEL, *who is sleeping, her head pillowed by the doublet of* MARTIN: *her temples are bound by a kerchief.* MARAH, *her arms folded on her breast, leans against a fragment of rock.* WALLET *stands near her. Behind, upon an elevated part of the reef, are several Gitanos; and lower down are huddled together some half-dozen of the crew of the wrecked ship.* DANGERFIELD, CHUDLEIGH, WELFORD, *and* TRACY *form another group on the right.*

WALLET (*to* MARTIN).—How fares it with her now? Doth she still sleep?

MARTIN (*laying his finger on his lip*).—Yes, but 'tis a troubled slumber. The poor lass is dreaming of the wreck, and murmurs in her sleep.

WALLET.—No marvel that she does so. 'Twas a fearful sight: eight hundred souls in all their strength and pride thronging that ship but some few hours past, and *now*

(*pointing to the Gitanos and sailors*) yonder miserable, shivering wretches all that remain. May Heaven show mercy to those gone to their account!

MARTIN (*solemnly*).—Amen to that; and may my deed find mercy too!

WALLET.—Speak no more of it. Thou wert but faithful to thy country—faithful unto death!

MARTIN.—Thou speakest kindly, pedler. Speak do I say? I owe thee far more than fair words. I saw thee strive to ward my Mabel here from sword and pike when the maddened Spaniards closed around us. I saw thee take upon thine own arm the thrust which grazed *her* temple. And, traitor or true man, may Heaven reward thee for it!

WALLET.—Hist! it may be thou wilt one day—— But thy wife (*pointing to* MABEL): she speaks again.

MABEL (*speaking in her sleep*).—Martin! Martin! hold me close. Hark! how they shriek for help! Must they all perish—perish in their guilt? And the waves, the waves! Martin! Martin! loose not thy hold! let us die together—but not—— (*She wakes suddenly, and flings her arms round* MARTIN'S *neck*). Husband! hold me, hold me!

MARTIN (*soothing her*).—I have thee, Mabel, dear girl, I have thee. Why, so, so—thou hast been dreaming, lass. 'Tis Martin speaks to thee. All's safe now. (*Aside.*) Heaven forgive me! for that's not true!

MABEL (*partly raising herself and looking round her*).—Safe! Where are we, then? The waves still heave around us, and——Ah! I remember now. Oh me! oh me! Martin, that gallant ship, with all that stirring crowd upon her deck; those proud men in their glittering armour. And now, oh *now*——

MARTIN.—Mabel, they were the enemies of our land; they came to plunder and to slay, to waste our harvest fields, and give our homesteads to the flames; but to this single hand the power was given to crush them in their pride, and wer't to do again—— But that's over now; and may their souls find mercy! (*Sadly.*) May Heaven have mercy on us all!

MABEL (*looking earnestly at him*).—Martin, thou lookest—this black ridge of rocks—and sea, sea on every side. Surely I should know this place?

MARTIN.—Recall thee, Mabel. Rememberest thou not my words when, clasped in each other's arms, we knelt upon the deck of the Spanish ship?

MABEL.—Yes, yes! thou saidst the ship was speeding on the Rock of Eddystone—that dreadful rock on which so many poor mariners have found their graves.

MARTIN.—Yes, the Reef of Eddystone. Upon this rock, from whose sharp sides it has been my task, boy and man (and that's a comfort now), to keep clear many a good English craft—— Mabel, it may be that—— Ods me! one mustn't be down-hearted. Marah, girl! thou hast an eye like a hawk. What see'st thou—there away?

MARAH.—Nothing, master! nothing but the flash of the billows' foam in the red sunlight.

WALLET (*to* MARTIN).—How far is this Reef of Eddystone from the mainland?

MARTIN.—The Ram's Head is the nearest point, and that's a good nine miles away.

MABEL (*in a low voice*).—Martin!

MARTIN.—Well, lass, what is it?

MABEL.—Martin, don't chide me—perhaps 'tis wrong in me to utter what, perchance, is a vain fear—but the tide?

MARTIN (*as if hesitating to answer*).—The tide! Well, lass, the saying runs that "Time and Tide wait for no man," nor woman either for that matter—not even for Queen Bess herself—God bless her!

MABEL.—Martin, I have heard thee say that at high tide the waters rise above this rock. Are they not rising now? Martin! skilful swimmer as thou art, why should we both perish? Wilt thou promise me to try and save thyself if —if I should——

MARTIN.—Wilt thou promise to keep a brave heart? Save myself, forsooth! and—— But *there*—I daren't be angry with thee. Courage, lass; through Heaven's mercy we've weathered *one* storm, and we shan't be deserted now. So let us keep trustful hearts, and—— *There! there!* didn't I say so? Look yonder! there away! (*pointing*).

MABEL.—There! Where that distant sea-bird wheels so near the waves?

MARTIN.—Sea-bird? Ay! a sea-bird that brings help!

life! on its white wings. A sail! a sail! and bearing towards us, too!

DANGERFIELD (*approaching* MARTIN).—A sail say'st thou? What is she? Can you make her out?

MARTIN.—Well, I may be wrong, but to my thinking, to *some* of us on this rock she won't bring a large cargo of comfort.

DANGERFIELD.—What mean you by that?

MARTIN.—Well, if we *do* gain the deck of yonder vessel, we shan't put our feet *this time* on Spanish timber.

[*The priest glances keenly at* MARTIN, *and turns away.*

DANGERFIELD (*aside to* CHUDLEIGH *and the rest*).—Gentlemen, a ship is making towards us: a brief space will show us what she is. It may be she will prove to be one of the Spanish tempest-driven host. If so, well; but should she be an English bark——

WELFORD.—What then?

DANGERFIELD.—Then, gentlemen, 'twere well we make our peace with Heaven; for ere another sun is down, there is some danger that our heads may be set on the battlements of Plymouth Castle.

SIR MAURICE.—Not while Trevannion holds the fortress.

DANGERFIELD.—Ay, but his own head may grace the party.

TRACY.—Who shall accuse us?

DANGERFIELD (*glancing towards* MARTIN).—Is it needful you should ask?

TRACY.—The pilot, Truegold, will he denounce us?

DANGERFIELD.—Most surely will he; and, what is worse, he will be believed.

SIR MAURICE.—Not if we repel the charge. Is the single word of this seaman to outweigh the denial of a Welford, a Tracy, or a Chudleigh?

DANGERFIELD (*with irony*).—They are noble names, but they are borne by men who will be found in dangerous company. The Spanish sailors—the fragments of the wreck that heave for miles around this rock—yea, the very bodies of the drowned may witness against us. Yet I fear not *these*, if yonder *man* be silent; but if *he* reveal your share in last night's work, though your lineage were traced even to a royal stock, your graves are already dug!

WELFORD.—Will gold secure his silence?

DANGERFIELD.—Gold! What answer did he give the Spaniard? What was his deed? Look you, sirs: this man hath deceived my expectations, blighted my hopes, perilled the cause for which I would lay down my life; yet would I give my right hand to win him for a friend; but as it is——

WALLET (*who has joined the conspirators*).—Well, as it is?

DANGERFIELD (*sinking his voice*).—I may esteem the tempered and unsullied steel of a good Damascus blade; but if it be raised against my heart, I snap it—if I *can*.

TRACY.—But there are other witnesses.

DANGERFIELD.—Their unsupported voices might harm us little, the real peril is with Martin Truegold. He is the very idol of the fleet. If he accuse us to Effingham, his word will be taken; ay, though it were weighed against a belted Earl's——

WALLET (*looking at* DANGERFIELD).—Or, the expectant of a Cardinal's hat. But why slay this man? This is weak, I know, but then I have not had thy holy training. Still, I say his death avails us nothing. We shall be still accused.

DANGERFIELD (*with a quick glance*).—By whom?

WALLET.—By all the witnesses thyself hath named. Our presence *here* condemns us. We are *in* the *snare*, but to stain the meshes with innocent blood will not free us from the net. And I believe not even the teachings of St. Omer counsel *useless murder*.

DANGERFIELD.—For our presence *here*, be that my task: our errand to this reef was one of mercy; we came to bear away the survivors of the wreck, and our boat was lost in the attempt. Who shall gainsay this, if Truegold's voice be silenced?

TRACY.—They who are with him: his wife, the girl Marah.

DANGERFIELD.—If you fear them, your poniards, gentlemen, must secure your safety; yet stay, 'twere speedier, surer work to have the Spaniards with us.

WELFORD.—And they will need small urging to revenge their comrades' fate.

DANGERFIELD.—True. I have watched their glances; and, if their hands be ready and sufficient, why, let the task be theirs.

CHUDLEIGH.—Nay, but hear me. Welford, Tracy, is there no way but this?

TRACY.—None, none!

WALLET (*fiercely*).—Yes, I say yes! Try the fortune of the waves, gentlemen; swim for it! Nay, I'll be warrant for your lives.

WELFORD.—Thou!

WALLET.—Ay, from *drowning*. Trust to the proverb, sirs, musty from age, but true: "*They who are born for the Rope need never fear the Water!*"

DANGERFIELD.—Fool, or traitor, obstruct us not.

[DANGERFIELD *advances to the Spaniards, followed by* CHUDLEIGH, &c. &c. WALLET *returns to* MARTIN.

MARAH (*who has keenly watched the conspirators*).—Master, there is evil boding—evil to *thee*. Yonder men, I have marked them closely, and *death* is in their eyes. See how they whisper!

MARTIN.—Well, there *is* foul weather in their looks, sure enough. Thy knife, girl, thy knife. I'll show them some play, if they mean to grapple with us.

MARAH (*wringing her hands*).—Woe! woe, the while! Gone, master, gone! My weapon rests within the heart of him who would have slain thee. Gone! gone!

MARTIN.—Belay, belay, lass; if these gallants *will* show their teeth, why (*snatching up a long fragment of a spar*), why, here's a toothpick for their dainty mouths. Mabel, darling, don't tremble. Why, see now, there are but four of 'em, for I don't count the Spanish jackets a broken cockle-shell. Keep up your heart, my girl! I think I can show them a bout of English quarter-staff that shall keep our heads till yonder craft overhauls us.

MABEL (*rising*).—Martin, 'tis *thee* they fear. Care not for me, husband! They will kill thee if thou stayest. Swim towards the coming ship; remember thou art but one against so many. Save thyself while there is yet time; for see, they point towards thee, and draw their knives. Martin, to thee at least these men will show *no* mercy. Martin, if thou lov'st me, go!

MARTIN.—If I love thee! That would be a pretty way of showing it, wouldn't it? Leave thee, eh! amongst the jaws of these land-sharks? Now, Mabel, don't thee be a little fool. Keep close and quiet, and trust in Him who has already brought us through the breakers.

MARAH.—Ay, master, and there are those here whose aid *I* have a right to claim.

WALLET.—True, the Gitanos; speak to them, girl.

[MARAH *mounts quickly to the Gitanos, to whom she appeals with earnest gestures.*

MARTIN.—Nay, please Heaven, we'll get into smooth water without the help of the brown-skins; though (*to* WALLET), for the sake of this dear wench, I—I would rather we didn't come to hard knocks. (MARAH *returns.*) Well, what say they?

MARAH (*with a despairing gesture*).—They will render help to *me;* but they will strike no blow for *you* or yours. Yet see! (*showing a poniard*). They have given me this.

MARTIN.—Keep it, good lass, and take the aid thy friends have proffered thee. If we *must* go down, there's no need to draw thee with us. Stand clear; they're coming. (*The conspirators, who have drawn their poniards, advance towards* MARTIN, *who keeps them at bay with the spar,* MARAH *standing prepared with her weapon to assist him.*) Now, which among ye wishes to have his brains scattered on these rocks? The first who comes within the swing of this timber dies, as surely as my name is Martin Truegold.

WALLET (*to the conspirators*).—Hold, sirs! if it be the coming of yonder vessel which urges you to take the life of this man, pause in your intent: her course is stopped.

TRACY.—By Heaven! he speaks truth. See, she stands off from us.

MARTIN (*lowering the spar*).—Right, she does so. And now, my masters, you may spare yourselves the pains and the *sin* of killing any one, for the tide will save you the trouble.

DANGERFIELD.—The tide!

MARTIN.—Yes; the tide! Ere yonder sun sinks—and there's not much of him left—the sea will make a clean

breach over this rock. The Eddystone at high water lies two fathoms below the waves! So fling aside your poniards, and let us all pray for that mercy which we shall all soon need. (*A pause.*)

DANGERFIELD.—Martin Truegold, men speak of you as a swift and skilful swimmer. The crew of that ship, believing that Spaniards only are clustered on this rock, may refuse to aid us; but she still hovers in the distance: could you reach her?

MARTIN.—And if I could?

DANGERFIELD.—Martin Truegold, pledge to me—to all—your solemn word, your faith as a true Englishman, if we be rescued from these advancing waters, that your lips will ne'er reveal aught that may put our lives in peril; that no danger to yourself shall tempt you, even by a word, to draw suspicion on *me*, or those whose cause is mine. Swear *this*, and *we* will guard your wife from danger till succour comes. Refuse—and these men (*pointing to the Spanish sailors*), who hunger for revenge, shall be loosed to wreak their vengeance ere the waves engulf us.

MARTIN.—Mabel, thou hearest; I—I may save thee.

MABEL.—Yes, yes; for thyself, Martin, not for me, pledge them the word they ask.

MARTIN (*raising his hand*).—Then witness all: I, Martin Truegold, on the faith of an Englishman, do pledge my word never to reveal by word or deed, whatever may betide me, aught that can draw down peril on thy head or those who league with thee.

DANGERFIELD (*holding out his hand*).—Thy hand upon it.

MARTIN (*after a moment's hesitation*).—*Must* I grasp *thine?* Well, my hand upon it! there (*grasping* DANGERFIELD'S *hand*); but mark, if evil comes to *her* (*pointing to* MABEL), though it be but a hair of her head, my tongue is loosed.

DANGERFIELD.—Be it so. Now leap, ere it be too late.

MARTIN.—Mabel (*kissing her*), God bless thee! And thou (*to* DANGERFIELD), keep thou thy word, or woe upon thy head! (*He springs on a projecting portion of the reef, and leaps into the sea.*)

DANGERFIELD (*as a cry rises from the Spaniards*).—

Gentlemen, ring round this woman! Keep *we our* faith; there is no fear for *his*. And you, girl (*to* MARAH, *who has mounted to the highest point*), say, how speeds he?

MARAH (*watching*).—Gallantly, gallantly; already is he an arrow's flight on his way, and *now* a boat puts off to meet him.

WELFORD.—But the waves, they gain on us with fearful speed.

DANGERFIELD.—No matter; our task is to protect the hostage he has left us: look to your weapons. Well (*to* MARAH), how goes it now?

MARAH (*gazing earnestly*).—I can scarce tell now, the light fades so fast. Yes; *now* I see him; he rises upon a wave far away. And the boat—joy! a few more strokes and he will gain it.

DANGERFIELD.—He hath done *his* part, then: for *us* it is to *wait*.

MABEL (*raising her hands*).—And hope!

[MARAH *unwinds the scarf from her head and waves it. The sea appears to advance rapidly round the rock; and as the disc of the sun is fast disappearing the curtain falls.*

END OF ACT THIRD.

ACT IV.—Scene I.

THE RING.

"Guard well this ring Ianthe, in its circle,
So tiny it might form the Elf-King's diadem,
The mighty question of a Life is compass'd!
So little, yet so large, have it in jealous keeping."
Old Play.

The battlements of Old Plymouth Castle, by sunrise. On an upper range of ramparts a sentinel is pacing. In the foreground is a turret with a grated door (L.); *the ramparts are much overgrown with ivy. As the curtain rises,* Marah *is seen climbing the ramparts from the exterior of the castle. She gains the top of the battlements, and avoiding the observation of the sentinel, who appears and disappears during the progress of the scene, approaches the grated door of the turret, listens for a moment, and hastily conceals herself.*

Enter from the turret, Shackle, *a gaoler, followed by* Wallet.

Shackle.—Nay, nay, spare thy breath and use thy legs. Daybreak will soon be here. I shall but make a turn or two round the walls; and then fast again must I have thee under lock and key.

Wallet.—But hear thee—hear thee, now, good Master Shackle, 'tis but little I ask thee—naught but an answer to a question.

Shackle.—Ay, ay, but prisoners may not ask questions—at least, they must expect but short answers, if they do.

Wallet.—Who says that I am a prisoner?

SHACKLE.—Marry! they who placed thee under my wardship, mark you. And yet, like a soft-hearted old fool as I am, I suffer thee to take the air for some minutes' space upon these ramparts. It is weak, most weak, only——

WALLET.—Only I have given thee license to take to thyself the contents of my pack, Master Shackle. Think of the three piled Genoa velvets, the brocades from Lyons, of which thou art now the master. Ay, and consider further the reward which I have promised thee if thou wilt but——

SHACKLE.—Give thee freedom—that is, put my neck into the hempen noose, which they say is waiting for thee, which, of a surety, would be my guerdon. And yet in good sooth I'm sorry for thee.

WALLET.—Thou art?

SHACKLE.—Ay, in my younger days, *I* carried a pack and a good ell wand myself, and that's one reason why I should stretch a point or two for thee, brother chapman. But what the plague hadst thou to be meddling with wares fit only for thy betters? Treason forsooth! High treason! Pish! that's a ware fit only for dukes, and earls, and queens, and such like, to deal in.

WALLET (*aside*).—So, this is their drift then. And charge they this offence on me?

SHACKLE.—Ay, truly; they say thou art as great a traitor as he who will swing this morning from his own Beacon on Plymouth Hoe.

WALLET (*anxiously*).—The beacon! Mean you Truegold—Martin Truegold?

SHACKLE.—Surely do I. Martin, the pilot, of Plymouth Hoe. He who was tried yesterday in the great hall of the castle, and condemned to die the death of a traitor to-day.

WALLET.—To-day! (*Aside.*) Villains! remorseless villains, thus to murder him! And I—I, whom they cage here, so powerless to help him. Good Master Shackle, I think thou told'st me, yesterday, that our good Queen was on her way to visit this town of Plymouth?

SHACKLE.—And I told thee truth. The Queen, Heaven save her Grace! rested yesterday at Crediton. Ay, and with a rare company of gentlemen in her train.

WALLET.—And with them, as I think, Walsingham—Sir Francis Walsingham?

SHACKLE.—Ay, I heard his name amongst them.

WALLET.—Knowest thou when the queen may be expected?

SHACKLE.—Not before noon.

WALLET.—And—and he, the prisoner, at what hour does he suffer death?

SHACKLE (*testily*)—And how does that concern *thee? Thou* art not to bear him company, at least, not to-day.

WALLET.—But it *doth* concern me, thou *must* answer me.

SHACKLE.—*Must*, forsooth! But there, my good nature will be the ruin of me. At ten o'clock Martin Truegold will—eh! what's that? (MARAH, *who has endeavoured to overhear the conversation, makes an involuntary movement, arousing the attention of* SHACKLE; *as he turns, she conceals herself.*) Methought I—Umph! the wind muttering through the ivy. But (*turning to* WALLET) I've wasted too much time with thee (*going to the door of the turret, which he locks*). There! between this and yonder grating (*pointing* R.) thou may'st stretch thy legs. And make the best use of them, for I shall be back anon.

WALLET.—Nay, but good brother o' the wand, sweet Master Shackle, but one word——

SHACKLE.—Tut, tut! there have been over many words already; hold thy peace, with a murrain to thee! else I'll lock thee fast before I go.

WALLET.—A messenger, good Shackle; procure me but a messenger, thou shalt have the weight of thy keys in gold.

SHACKLE (*angrily*).—Thou shalt have the weight of my keys over thy pate. Hold thy peace, I say: a pretty coil this. [*Exit* SHACKLE (R.)

WALLET (*despairingly*).—Useless! useless—as well appeal to these granite walls. And this brave man to die thus! die! with rescue so near, yet so hopeless! (MARAH *approaches him, and lays her hand upon his shoulder.*) Marah! you!

MARAH (*raising her hand to her lips*).—Hush! Yonder man's footsteps still fall upon my ear. So, he hath passed

and locked the grating; this way, this way. More in the shadow of this turret, lest the sentinel observe us. Now, where is he?

WALLET.—Whom mean you?

MARAH.—My master. Tell me in what part of this stronghold lies Martin Truegold?

WALLET.—Alas! I know not. I am myself a prisoner. But *you*, girl, how gained you entrance?

MARAH.—Enough that I am *here*. And yet, perhaps, 'tis better you should know. See (*pointing over the ramparts*), by that path I came.

WALLET (*looking over*).—Mean you that you have climbed that wall—that wall, at least some eighty feet from the moat beneath?

MARAH.—Ay, and do you marvel I should have done so? Man! I have climbed the straight face of many a cliff of double height with little else to aid me but the fissures of its sides. And for what! to take the eggs of the sea-eagle, because *he* prized them to deck his chamber. This I have done to win a smile from him. Is it strange, then, that I have found these ramparts an easier task when they hold him within them a prisoner?—a prisoner doomed to—— No; my lips shall not utter it.

WALLET.—Thou know'st his peril, then?

MARAH.—Ay, none so well as I. Stranger, I saw him, my master, Martin Truegold, stand yesterday before his judge, accused—mark you—accused of treason to his Queen.

WALLET.—And his answer—gave he none?

MARAH.—None! none! he stood and heard the slander; stood mute amidst the murdering hounds who bayed the lie against him.

WALLET.—But his wife, Mabel; and *thou*, too, Marah?

MARAH.—Ay! thou would'st ask were *we* silent? *I* was not; but when I hurled the lie against them the gipsy was thrust forth with scoff and blow. And for his wife, the law, forsooth, permitted not her voice to be heard in his behalf.

WALLET.—He keeps, then, his oath of silence—keeps it even unto death.

MARAH (*passionately*).—No, no; I tell thee, no! I

have watched through the night, and if the lore of our tribe my mother taught me fails me not, the dark hour will be 'scaped—the silver thread be found again. And yet, oh me! if I should have read untruly—— But thou! (*turning suddenly on* WALLET) why hast *thou* made no effort to free him from these snares?

WALLET.—Because I myself am feared, distrusted, held a prisoner, by those who seek Martin Truegold's life. For five days I have not been without my dungeon. Had not Trevannion himself been on board the ship that bore us from the reef I had found means to—— Yet stay! if thou hast climbed these walls—yes; there's still a hope—Marah, thou may'st save thy master.

MARAH.—May the bright stars bless him who tells me so. Speak! what must I do?

WALLET.—Could'st thou descend from these ramparts?

MARAH.—By the way I came?

WALLET.—Would thy heart fail thee? 'Tis a fearful task.

MARAH (*impatiently*).—Fail! Go on; thy bidding.

SHACKLE (*without, singing*).—

"Over the moorland and over the lea."

WALLET.—Hist! the gaoler returns. Quick—to thy hiding-place. [*Re-enter* SHACKLE. MARAH *conceals herself.*

SHACKLE.—"Over the moorland——" Now my bird o' the moors, art thou ready for thy cage?

WALLET.—Ready! not I, I promise you; a few minutes more grace. Come now, what matters five minutes or so, more or less?

SHACKLE.—What matters it! It may matter the losing of my place. In, I say (*unlocks the grating in the turret*).

WALLET.—Come, come, for the sake of old days. Why I heard thee singing the pedler's ditty e'en now, and rarely, too. What a voice thou must have had when thou trod'st the road, singing—

"Over the moorland and over the lea,
The packman he comes from the fair, oh!
I trow never guest is more welcome than he,
Wherever he calls with his ware, oh!"

There's another verse. Hum! how goes it?

SHACKLE.—How goes it! Why thus—. Ods bodikins! many's the mile I've trolled it over the heather.

"For dames must have kirtles and kerchiefs so fine,
And—and——"

WALLET (*prompting him*).—

"And their husbands in hosen go share, oh!"

SHACKLE.—Thou hast it:—

"While ribbons for head-gear—and—and

WALLET.—

"And gewgaws that shine."

TOGETHER.—

"Maidens need for their bonny brown hair, oh!"

WALLET.—Ha! a rare song; and how thou must have trolled it. Ah! *thou* must have been the man to take the measure of thy customers' feet, more especially the maidens. And—and thou'lt give me the five minutes?

SHACKLE (*softening*).—Go to, go to! thou'rt a wheedling rogue; but there, thou shalt have them, and I'll stay and keep thee company.

WALLET.—Nay, nay; that were asking too much; and in good truth, I would weave some thoughts out of this loom here (*tapping his forehead*) to meet this charge of treason: the morning sea-breeze will quicken my brain; but let me be alone.

SHACKLE.—Well, well, as thou wilt; but mark! only five minutes; the guard will be here anon to change the watch. And then I must have thee away. (*He enters the turret, closing and locking the grating behind him, as he sings the last lines of the song*)—

"While ribbons for head-gear and gewgaws that shine,
Maidens need for their bonny brown hair, oh!"

WALLET (*listening at the grating, then turning to* MARAH).—Now approach; every moment is precious.

MARAH—Use them then, I listen.

WALLET.—Know'st thou the road to Crediton?

MARAH.—Yes, and the shortest path to it.

WALLET.—Ay, but it is the broad high road can alone lead to safety. See'st thou this ring? (*taking the ring he*

showed in Act 1st *from the inner pocket in his doublet.*) Take it—guard it. Speed towards Crediton; turn not from thy course till thou meetest a proud array of horsemen; in the midst of the throng will ride the Queen of this realm—Elizabeth—and by her side her trusty servant, Walsingham; care not for threat or blow (but what need to tell thee that); place the ring in the hands of him I have named. Tell him the pedler, Wallet, is in peril, a prisoner in this castle. Tell him that cruel wrong will be done in Plymouth Town this morn, unless he speeds to stop it. Why dost thou gaze upon me? Quick—to the wall! no hand or foot can do this errand but thine own.

MARAH.—And *while* I do it, they may lead him forth to—no—let another bear the message (*returning the ring.*) If he *must* die (*with a bitter smile*), why I must be near to reckon with his slayers!

WALLET (*seizing her wrist*).—Girl, thou hast held within thy hands the only means of rescue. Marah, *thou lov'st this man.* It needs not the burning crimson on thy cheek to show me the secret of thy heart—thou lov'st him.

MARAH.—Think what thou wilt. At least, were every hair upon my head a life, I'd give them all to save him. Methinks his fair wife could do no more.

WALLET.—And yet thou dalliest with the moments on which his life depends. Hark! I hear the returning footsteps of my gaoler, if he behold thee, every shred of hope is lost. Resolve, ere it be too late.

MARAH (*gazing at him*).—I have scanned thy hand. And there is that within thy face which tells me I may trust thee—and I *will* trust thee. Give me the ring! Thy errand shall be done. (*She takes the ring, and gaining that part of the ramparts by which she came, prepares to descend.*)

WALLET (*watching her as she descends*).—Remember Walsingham! So, so; be not too rash! My heart turns sick to see her—how swiftly she descends, clinging to ivy stem and roughened stone. And yet how surely——(*As she makes her way down, a stone, loosened by her foot, is detached, and falls.*) Ah, Heaven shield her! yet she clings still—but the sentinel—he pauses on his round. Ho there, soldier! for pity's sake, fire not! 'tis

but a girl. (*The sentinel levels his arquebus, and fires.* MARAH *clings for a moment, and falls.*) Lost, lost! the waters of the moat have closed above her head!

[*A drum beats an alarm.*

SHACKLE (*re-entering hastily from the turret*).—In, in. What work is here? get thee in, I say!

WALLET (*striving with* SHACKLE, *who endeavours to drag him away*).—No, no! let me gaze from these ramparts, but for a moment. Loose thy hold—loose it, old man; I would not harm thee. Nay, then (*he flings* SHACKLE *from him*). Better *I* dare the task, than stay here to perish.

[*He rushes towards the rampart*

SHACKLE (*calling*).—Ho there! Guard, I say,—guard!

[*An officer, attended by arquebusiers, enters from the turret, the soldiers present their pieces at* WALLET, *the upper ramparts being, at the same time, filled by armed men.*

WALLET (*turning from the ramparts*).—I yield me, sirs. (*Aside.*) 'Tis over, then. And Heaven's hand, not mine, must shape the rest.

[*He passes out guarded. The scene changes to the court-yard of the citadel.*

SCENE II.

THE HEART OF GOLD.

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

BURNS.

The Courtyard of Plymouth Citadel, in the centre is a large gateway with portcullis, &c. On each side of the Quadrangle is an archway, with a short flight of steps.

On the right is an antique stone bench or seat. Enter from the archway on the left, SIR GILBERT TREVANNION, *followed by* DANGERFIELD. TREVANNION *carries an open letter in his hand.*

TREVANNION (*turning to* DANGERFIELD).—Well, your counsel? Shall we accede to this request?

DANGERFIELD.—So please you, let me read the letter?

[TREVANNION *gives the letter.* DANGERFIELD *reads—*

"HOWARD OF EFFINGHAM *to* SIR GILBERT TREVANNION, *Governor of Plymouth Castle, greeting—*

"Forasmuch as I learn it is your purpose to execute as a traitor Martin Truegold—known as the Pilot of Plymouth Hoe—now know, that it is my wish to have speech with the prisoner before he dies. Be sure that I have good reasons for demanding this. I am on my way, and, in brief space, shall by my own presence support the claims I make for this delay."

[*Returns the letter.*

TREVANNION.—How say you? Sounds not this like a command?

DANGERFIELD.—I read it so. But Howard of Effingham, though holding chief command of the Fleet, hath no warrant to compel obedience from the Governor of Plymouth Citadel. Martin Truegold hath had open trial; is condemned. "Delays," saith the proverb, "are dangerous;" trebly so are they to us. If you will listen to *my* counsel, it is this: *hasten* the hour of this man's death rather than protract it.

TREVANNION.—And yet to defy Effingham might work me evil. The Earl is all powerful with the Queen, and might——

DANGERFIELD.—Displace you from the post you hold! And for what? Because you were over zealous to send a traitor to the scaffold. Sir Gilbert Trevannion! the stake we play for is Life, and we must count no petty risks to win the game.

TREVANNION.—Yet by thy advice, the pilot's wife——

DANGERFIELD.—Is free. But to have menaced *her* had

been at once destruction; let him but *suspect* that *she* is perilled, and the seal is taken from his lips.

TREVANNION.—Enough! (*Enter from the tower on the left, an officer of the Citadel, carrying in his hand a belt to which is attached a pouch.*) Now, sir, the alarm we heard upon the western ramparts, hast learned the cause?

OFFICER.—Some mad creature was seen by the sentinel clinging midway on the wall—he fired on her.

TREVANNION.—How? A woman, say you?

OFFICER.—So 'tis thought.

DANGERFIELD (*anxiously*).—Did the bullet reach its mark?

OFFICER.—The poor wretch dropped into the moat, and doubtless lies dead within it.

DANGERFIELD.—What have you there?

OFFICER.—A leathern belt found floating on the water—as yet, the only trace of her who wore it.

DANGERFIELD.—Let me see it. (*Officer hands him the girdle.*) Methinks I should know this belt. So (*examining the pouch*), a cross-bolt! As I thought, 'tis Marah's.

TREVANNION.—Marah's!

DANGERFIELD (*aside to* TREVANNION).—The gipsy-serving wench at Truegold's hostel. A very savage both in love and hate. The girl hath met her death in this wild attempt to gain access to her master. 'Tis better so—— (*Returns the belt to the officer.*)

[*A loud shout and tumult is heard beyond the portcullis.*

TREVANNION (*to the officer*).—What means this tumult? Hasten and bring me word.

[*The officer bows, goes out by the centre gateway, and returns.*

OFFICER.—My Lord of Effingham has entered the Castle, and with him—bearing down all restraint—a crowd of mariners and townsmen. See! they are here!

Enter, through the centre archway, EFFINGHAM, *leading by the hand* MABEL TRUEGOLD, *followed by several officers of his ship, mariners, townspeople, &c. &c.*

EFFINGHAM (*raising his plumed bonnet*).—A fair good morrow to Sir Gilbert Trevannion. I trust that he will forgive my unbidden presence thus surrounded. A somewhat unruly following, I own, but the knaves are well nigh mad with joy for the great victory over our Spanish foes, which Heaven hath been pleased to give to our arms.

TREVANNION (*returning the salute*).—My Lord of Effingham, at least, must ever be a welcome guest within this castle. In what way can I serve him?

EFFINGHAM.—By granting the request with which my letter has already made him acquainted.

TREVANNION.—My lord, pardon me if I say, to yield it can answer no good purpose. Martin Truegold hath been found guilty of foul treason to his Queen; treason which he denied not before me, his judge.

MABEL.—Ay, through false accusers!

MARINERS.—Ay, ay, false accusers. Justice! justice!

EFFINGHAM (*raising his hand*). — Peace there! Sir Gilbert Trevannion, the streets of Plymouth are thronged by multitudes who threaten the peace of her Majesty's town. I have pledged my word to the people that Martin Truegold shall be questioned by myself. If you refuse me, on your head will rest the riot and bloodshed that will most surely follow. But give me the privilege I ask, and if I find no cause to stay his sentence, my own sword—ay, were he of my own blood—shall aid you see it executed.

TREVANNION (*to* DANGERFIELD).—You hear?

DANGERFIELD (*aside*).—It is the lesser evil to accede. You must yield.

TREVANNION (*to* EFFINGHAM).—Be it as you will, my lord. (*To the officer.*) Conduct the prisoner hither.

[*Exit officer by the gateway on the left.*

EFFINGHAM.—And his accusers? are they present?

TREVANNION.—They stand beside me. (*Pointing to* CHUDLEIGH, WELFORD, *and* TRACY, *who have just entered.*) These gentlemen, whose names are not unknown in Devonshire.

EFFINGHAM (*returning the salute of the conspirators*).—And you, sir (*to* DANGERFIELD)—*you*, as I think, are not of Devon?

DANGERFIELD.—No, my good lord, I am of York, a merchant of that city.

EFFINGHAM.—By name Adam Musgrave. And sometime a guest of Sir Gilbert Trevannion?

[DANGERFIELD *bows.*

TREVANNION.—An honoured guest, my lord. I pledge my word for the truth of Adam Musgrave.

MABEL.—Then is thy word pledged for a foul traitor. And *thou* as false a judge, as *he* a lying witness!

EFFINGHAM.—Peace, Mabel Truegold, thy husband comes. Be sure both he and thou shalt have full hearing.

[EFFINGHAM *seats himself on the stone bench; at the same time* MARTIN TRUEGOLD *enters from the gateway on the right, guarded. Murmurs from the mariners, &c. &c.*

MABEL.—Martin! Martin! speak and clear thyself.

EFFINGHAM.—Silence, I say! Have I not said that justice shall be done? Martin Truegold!

MARTIN.—Here, my honoured lord.

EFFINGHAM.—Martin Truegold, yesterday thou wert arraigned upon the charge of high treason to thy Queen and country. And upon the evidence of thy accusers condemned to die. Now mark, I have come hither to hear thee if thou canst, prove thyself what I have always thought thee, a true and loyal Englishman. What say'st thou?

MARTIN (*with a burst of feeling*).—Say! Why I say, God bless your honour for trying to lend a helping hand to a brother sailor in distress.

EFFINGHAM.—Martin, here stand the witnesses against thee. Where are thy own?

MARTIN.—Your honour, there is but one witness who can speak for me.

EFFINGHAM.—And where is he?

MARTIN (*reverently*).—Watching us all! *My* Master, my lord, and *yours*.

MABEL.—Not so, not so, my lord. *I* am here to speak for him. Not *he*, but they (*pointing to* DANGERFIELD *and the rest*) are guilty of the crime with which they charge him. I do accuse——

MARTIN (*interrupting her*).—Mabel—My lord, I pray you let me speak with her, ere you proceed; your patience shall be taxed but for a short space (EFFINGHAM *makes a sign to* MABEL, *who runs to* MARTIN), and, so please you, out of earshot.

EFFINGHAM.—Let it be so.

[*All retire some distance from* MARTIN *and* MABEL.

MARTIN.—Mabel, lass, dost remember thy promise, when, five days ago, we plighted our troth within the church?

MABEL.—To love thee, Martin dear, to love thee with all my heart and soul, to honour thee——

MARTIN.—And to *obey* me. Mabel, my own darling, thou must listen to me; twice have we stood, yea! upon the very brink of the grave, and twice have we been snatched from the peril. Well, let us still trust in that mercy already shown us. But if it be ordered that I should die, I must die a *true man!*

MABEL.—And hast thou *not* kept thy faith? Too well, too well thou hast. But *I*, *I* took no oath. *I* pledged no faith, and I *must* speak, Martin! Martin, 'tis not only life, 'tis good fame these fiends would rob thee of; Oh let *me* speak and baffle them.

MARTIN.—No, no, that were to break my oath, break it through thee; and be a trickster with my word. Would'st have me be one, Mabel? would'st have me juggle with the faith I pledged to Heaven? That were indeed to be a traitor. No! let them say their worst. Truth is sure to come to light, my lass, whate'er betide, and then——

MABEL (*bitterly*).—Truth! truth! but *when?* When thou art lying in thy grave, and *I* am mad with grief, or dead beside thee.

MARTIN (*wildly*).—Mabel! Wife! Would'st thou have me die a craven? a drivelling coward? Thou art striving hard to make me one.

MABEL (*flinging her arms round him*).—No! no! Martin, thou art right. I will obey thee, whate'er the pang. *There!* (*laying her head on his breast*) there! thus lying on thy heart, methinks I share its *strength* to meet my agony.

MARTIN (*kissing her*).—That's my own darling lass. Bless thee, my own dear lamb! To *thee* most surely shall this sharp wind be tempered (*stroking her hair*). And *now*, my lord, I'm ready. Let these men speak.

TREVANNION (*aside to* DANGERFIELD).—Will he fail us?

DANGERFIELD (*aside*).—Fear not; the steel within thy scabbard is not so true.

EFFINGHAM.—Martin, these witnesses have sworn that on the day the Spanish ship *La Santa Fé* was lost upon the reef of Eddystone, they put off for the rock to save the remnant of her crew; and that amidst the Spanish mariners they found *thee* and *her* who clings to thee.

MARTIN.—Your honour, they best know *how* they found themselves upon the Eddystone. For myself——

EFFINGHAM.—Well, man?

MARTIN.—For fifteen years, my lord, boy and man, have I plied a pilot's calling upon this coast of Devon. *How* I've done it is not for me to say; but I think there are some here who'll bear witness that Martin Truegold hasn't yet to learn how to steer a ship.

THE CROWD.—Ay, none like thee, Martin—none like thee!

MARTIN.—I am accused, your honour, of being aboard that Spanish vessel. Well, that's true. I *was* upon her deck; I *did* direct her helm; but seeing that she ran her bows right upon the rock of Eddystone, and that eight hundred of England's foes perished in the wreck, I say *that* might be bad seamanship for King Philip of Spain, but, to my thinking, Elizabeth of England—(long life to her!)—hasn't much reason to find fault with the steering.

MERRYWEATHER.—Hurrah, Martin! That's a shot 'twixt wind and water for 'em.

EFFINGHAM.—Silence, thou knave. (*To* MARTIN.) How camest *thou*, an English pilot, amidst the Spanish fleet?

MARTIN.—Well, not because I loved it. Be sure of *that*.

EFFINGHAM.—Hast thou no other answer? Wert thou entrapped, forced to the service? Speak! I will uphold thee against the highest noble of the land. Silent! What shall assure me 'twas not the tempest drove the Spanish ship upon the reef, and *not* thy guidance?

MARTIN.—My past life. Your honour has known me since I was scarce higher than your knee, and if you and those who stand about you can believe me so foul a traitor, and so black a liar, why, the sooner you put the halter round my neck the better.

THE CROWD.—No, Martin, no; we believe thee, we believe thee.

DANGERFIELD (*aside to* TREVANNION). — The scroll. Produce it.

TREVANNION.—There is yet another proof against him. This parchment scroll, written in Spanish, and found upon him. My friend, the merchant here, hath skill in foreign tongues. Shall he read it?

[EFFINGHAM *makes a sign of assent.* DANGERFIELD *takes the parchment from* TREVANNION, *and reads.*

"*The sharks are gathering, but they need a pilot fish to guide them to their prey. Find him, send him without delay. A collar of jewels shall circle his neck, and every scale on his body be turned to gold.*"

EFFINGHAM.—Let me see the writing. (*It is passed to him. To* MARTIN.) How came this parchment in thy possession?

MARTIN.—I took it from the wing of a carrier pigeon. Marah, my gipsy serving-wench, brought down the bird with her crossbow on—that day your honour drank your wine to my health as an honest man.

EFFINGHAM.—Know you for whom this message was intended?

MARTIN.—Mayhap I do.

EFFINGHAM.—Reveal their names, then.

MARTIN.—Heaven may. *I* can't.

EFFINGHAM (*impatiently*).—Now, by my hope of grace! thou triflest with thy life. One more question—look *well* to thy reply. My last charge, ere I sought my ship, was to bid thee kindle thy Beacon. Martin Truegold, was my bidding done? Was it thy hand that warned England of her coming peril?

MARTIN (*sadly*).—No. 'Twas not my hand.

EFFINGHAM.—Not thine! By whose, then?

DANGERFIELD (*stepping forward*).—By mine, my lord.

Finding the cliff deserted, and that man's task undone, I seized a newly-lighted brand which had been flung aside, and gave the warning signal.

A VOICE FROM THE CROWD.—Thou liest! Way there! Way, I say!

[MARAH *rushes through the throng.*

MARAH (*confronting* DANGERFIELD).—I say thou liest! 'Twas I who fired the beacon. 'Twas I who saw thee give drugged wine to Martin Truegold; who saw thee and thy fellow-traitors bear him away a senseless, helpless man on board the Spanish ship. 'Twas I who, on that ship, beheld him rend the snare you cast around him; beheld him choose death—death for himself and for his new-made bride—rather than swerve a foot to do the bidding of thy Spanish friends.

TREVANNION.—Seize on this wretched mummer! Scourge her from the gates!

MARAH.—No, no! Not a finger dare they lay upon me! Hark! (*The sound of trumpets and distant shouts are heard*). Hear you those joyous cries? Sir Gilbert Trevannion, it is your Queen! your Queen! who comes to judge thee for thy evil deeds. (*To* MARTIN.) Master! (*kneeling at his feet and kissing his hand*), she comes to save thee!

[*The shouts swell louder; the sound of cannon is heard; and surrounded by her attendant nobles, guards, &c.,* QUEEN ELIZABETH, *mounted on her palfrey, appears at the centre archway. The royal standard is borne behind her. The* QUEEN *rides forward a few paces; she is met by* EFFINGHAM, *who bends his knee; then rising, he assists her to dismount, and leads her to the seat he had occupied, and over which he throws his cloak.*

(*Chorus.*)

Fling to the wind our Standard,
Set free its Lions bold;
Our banners' stately warders,
In all their regal gold.

For peerless Una* cometh,
'Tis fitting they attend,
Her stern and faithful guardians,
Wherever she may wend.

Uplift the silver Lilies
Above her virgin head:
What foes, with such a ruler:
Need England ever dread?

All hail! great Tudor's daughter,
Wise scion of thy race;
Long may'st thou live, Elizabeth,
The sceptre's sway to grace!

In Heart the Lion of our shield,
In Soul its Lily pure;
With England's fame entwined thy name
For ever shall endure.

THE QUEEN (*seated*).—Sir Francis Walsingham, perform your duty. Yet stay; first command at once the presence of the man you seek.

[WALSINGHAM *bows, and advancing to an* OFFICER *of the garrison, gives him a paper. The* OFFICER *receives it respectfully, and enters the gateway on the left.*

THE QUEEN.—See there be no delay. And now your task.

WALSINGHAM (*advancing to* TREVANNION).—Sir Gilbert Trevannion, by warrant of our gracious Sovereign, I do attach thee as a traitor to this realm. Also you, Maurice Chudleigh, Giles Tracy, and Stephen Welford, I do attaint ye as aiders and abettors in this man's treason. Your swords.

[SIR GILBERT TREVANNION *and the others give up their swords to an* OFFICER *of the* QUEEN.

TREVANNION.—My liege, my offence I know not; but I trust that proof——

* The allegory of Una (or Virtue), with her attendant lion, in Spenser's "Faëry Queen," was often, by courtly poets, associated with the name of Elizabeth.

THE QUEEN.—Proof! Ay, by my troth, sir, full and sufficient proofs have we against thee. Long hath our faithful Walsingham suspected thee, and by a most trusty agent made himself master of thy most secret schemes.* Now—Our patience tires. Where is this witness?

[*Enter* WALLET, *attended by an* OFFICER.

WALSINGHAM (*indicating* WALLET, *who kneels to the* QUEEN).—Here, my liege.

THE QUEEN.—Stand up, man! So this, then, Sir Francis, is the trusty ferret that hath unearthed yonder vermin?

WALSINGHAM.—A trusty friend to England, your Majesty.

THE QUEEN.—And therefore friend to *me*. (*To* WALLET.) Now—thy charge against these men.

WALLET.—Communion with our enemies, the Spaniards, and intent to deliver up this castle of Plymouth into their hands. But I see *one* traitor who, as I think, stands unattainted. My liege, I do accuse this man, Geoffrey Dangerfield!

THE QUEEN.—Dangerfield!

WALLET (*advancing to the Priest*).—Yes, Geoffrey Dangerfield, Jesuit priest of St. Omer! falsely calling thyself Adam Musgrave, of York; arch-traitor and false accuser of this most true and loyal man (*pointing to* MARTIN), I do denounce thee! (*laying his hand on the Priest's shoulder.*)

DANGERFIELD (*shaking off his touch*).—Spy! reptile! crawl hence to those who hired thee; thy touch defiles me!

WALLET.—No, priest! no hireling! Avenger—Avenger of a kinsman's blood! 'Tis Richard Cranmer tells thee so! † 'Tis Richard Cranmer, whose grandsire's dying pangs were mocked by thee within the market-place of Oxford. I

* Walsingham, certainly one of the most astute of Elizabeth's statesmen, was renowned for the subtle modes by which he foiled the domestic enemies of his sovereign. One of the principal weapons he used was the employment of agents, who, pretending to join the disaffected, made themselves master of their schemes, and by timely warning enabled the minister to avert the many dangers with which at this period England was threatened.

† It is well known that Cranmer was married in early manhood. His wife died in childbirth, and it is believed the infant (a son) survived. This the author trusts will be a sufficient apology for introducing a descendant of the Archbishop in this drama.

marked thee, priest, boy as I was: I marked thy cruel smile, thy bitter words, amidst thy fellow-fiends the worst of all. *I* marked thee; and as the flames rose over the white head of Thomas Cranmer, I swore to track thee through life, nor leave thee till the headsman's axe repays *the pile of Oxford.*

THE QUEEN.—Peace, Cranmer! fair trial shall these men receive, and be judged by their offences. Remove them.

DANGERFIELD.—Fiat voluntas Dei!

[*The Conspirators are removed, guarded.*

THE QUEEN (*to* CRANMER).—But where is thy dusky messenger, the gipsy girl? So (*to* MARAH, *who advances and kneels*) we owe thee something, girl, for thy share in unmasking treason. Hast thou no boon to ask of us? Let it be one that we can reasonably grant, we pledge our royal word it shall be thine.

MARAH (*rising and pointing to a group of the Gitanos, who have mingled in the crowd*).—Great Queen, be *this*, then, the boon I ask of thee. These people are of my own race, brought hither from their own land against their will. Give them the means of rejoining their kindred.

THE QUEEN.—It shall be done; but for thyself?

MARAH.—For herself, thy servant asks but to depart with them.

MARTIN.—Depart, Marah! My brave, my faithful wench! Pardon me, your Majesty, if I speak unbidden—but to her I owe my life, my——

MARAH.—Master, it must be so! I have sworn it by an oath no daughter of my race can break. The stars have heard my vow. Master, farewell! (*She retires to the Gitanos.*)

THE QUEEN.—And now for *thee*, Martin Truegold. We have heard thy story on our way; we know what England owes to thee. Speak: how shall thy Queen repay thee?

MARTIN.—Repay me! So please your Grace, Martin Truegold requires nothing but your Majesty's kind words. And yet—if 'twere not too great a boon to ask, if I might kiss the fair and dainty hand that governs us so well, a proud man should I be to my dying day.

THE QUEEN (*smiling*).—Ah, ha! thou art a bold fellow to refuse our bounty, and yet crave a favour we accord only to those of gentle blood. This merits chastisement. Approach! Kneel down! My Lord of Effingham, thy sword. (*She takes the* EARL'S *sword, and lays the blade on* MARTIN'S *shoulder.*) Rise up, *Sir* Martin Truegold! *Now* thou *may'st* kiss our hand.

[MARTIN *springs up, kisses the* QUEEN'S *hand; then turns to* MABEL, *who advances. He takes his wife's hand, and they both kneel.*

THE QUEEN.—With fitting lands for thy condition will I endow thee; but being a knight, thou need'st a blazon for thy Maiden Shield. Be *thine* a—

HEART OF GOLD.

And for the motto—— Thyself shall choose it. Up man! to thy feet! Now, what shall our grateful England write upon thy 'scutcheon? Speak! 'tis thy Sovereign's will.

MARTIN.—Ah, my good Liege, were it to choose a fitting motto for thyself, how easy were the task!

THE QUEEN.—Ha! say'st thou for myself? Then be that motto *thine*. Come, let me hear it.

MARTIN.—This let it be, then: what every man must pray to be when trial and temptation gather round him; what our Queen *is*, and England ever shall be. Thus let the Legend run upon the Scroll:—

True to the Core.

[MARTIN *again kneels, and the* QUEEN, *taking a chain of gold from one of her pages, places it round his neck. All wave their hats, and amidst loud shouts of "Long live Elizabeth our Queen!"*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

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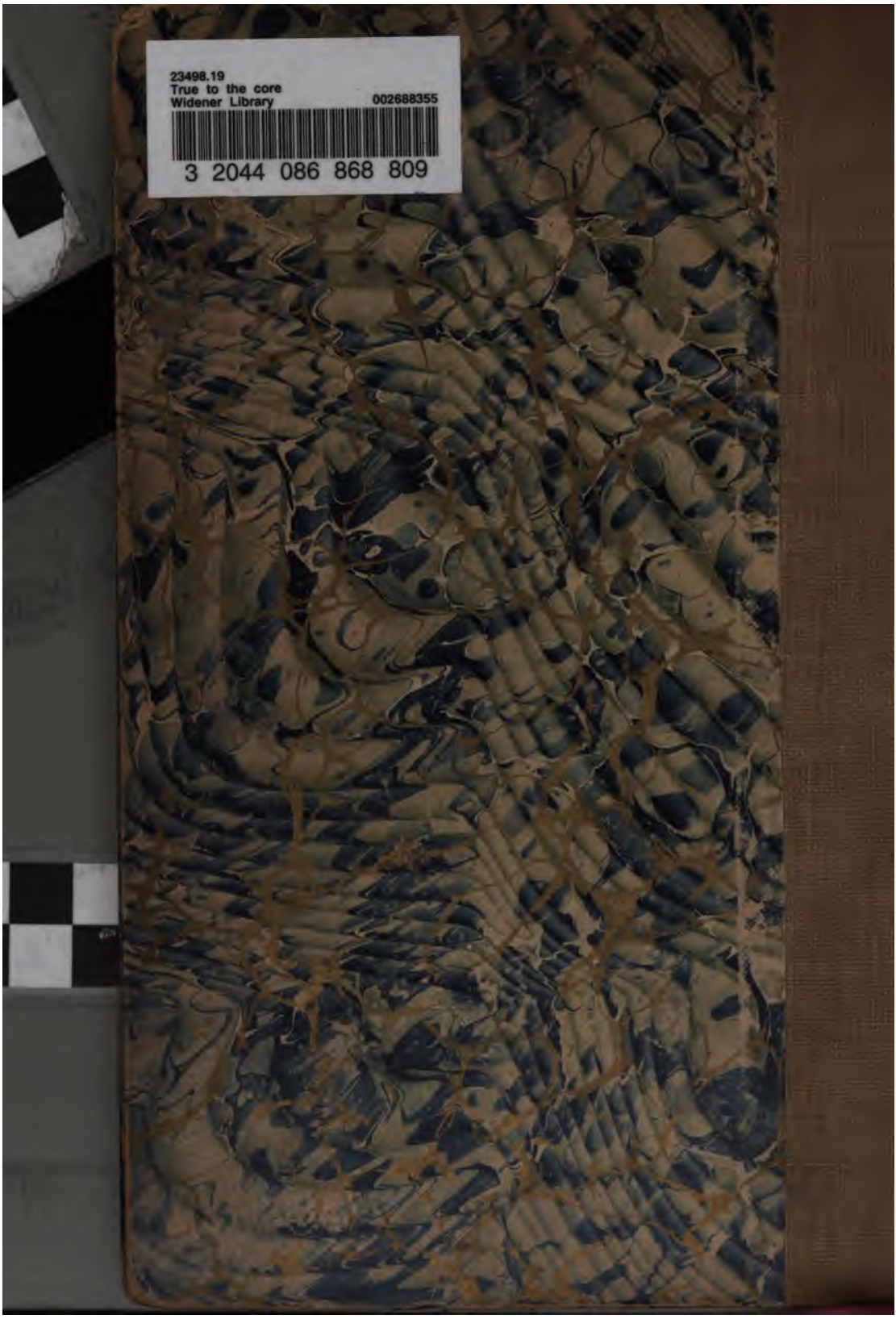
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